MAHARSHI KARVE

GANESH L. CHANDAVARKAR



POPULAR BOOK DEPOT

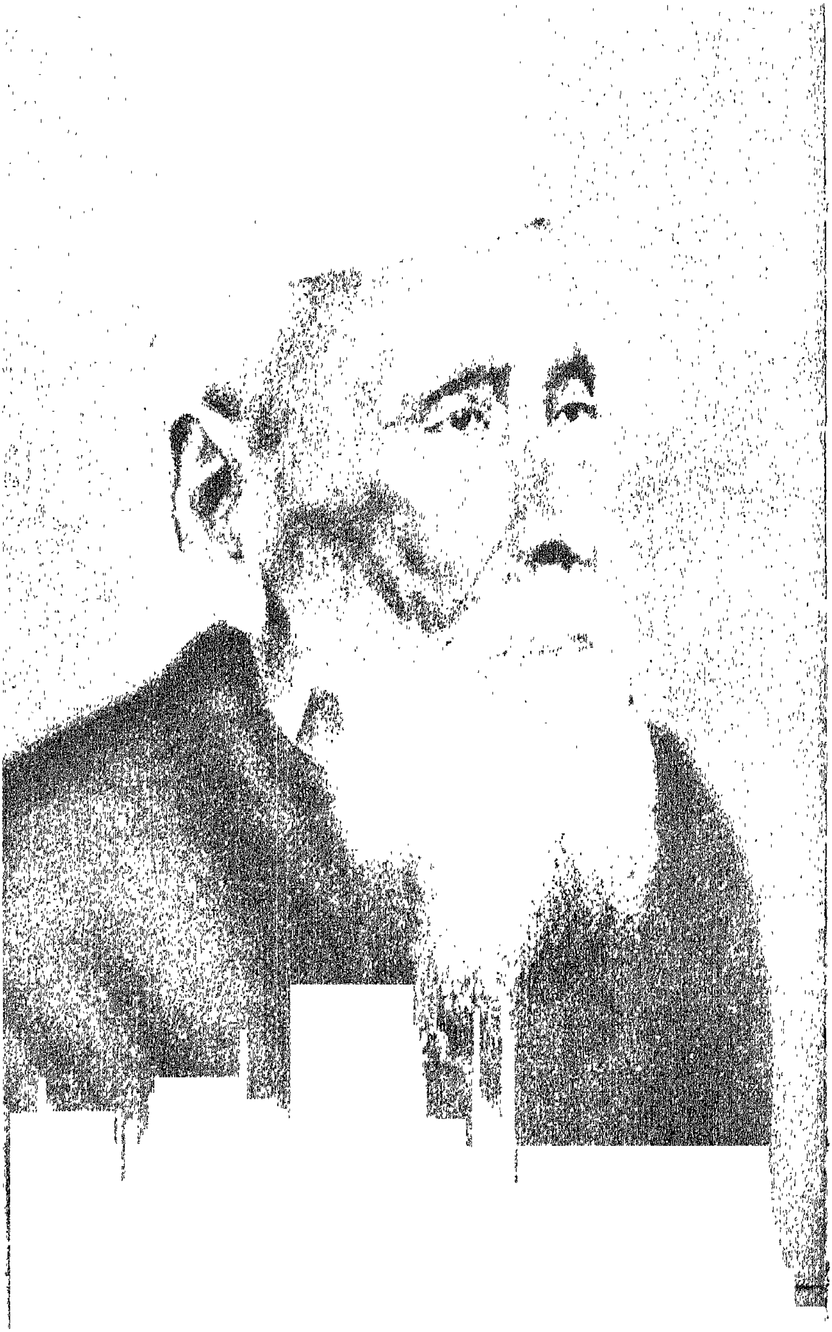
BOMBAY, 1958

Dhondo Keshav Karve, the hero of this saga, commands universal admiration and respect by his selfless devotion to social reform and national service.

A life crowned by the long span of a century has enabled him to realise most of his dreams and earn the highest honour that the country can bestow on any one—Bharat Ratna. Karve is rightly known as a Maharshi—a great savant.

His fight against social inequalities and the monumental work he has done in the cause of social reform in general, and education of the women in particular, have earned for him a place in the hearts of the people who have now learnt to look upon him as an institution in himself.

This biography inspiringly and ably written should serve as a source of inspiration to the present and the future generations.



MAHARSHI KARVE

by

GANESH L. CHANDAVARKAR

Introduction by
The Hon'ble Shri Justice
P. B. GAJENDRAGADKAR

Preface by
The Hon'ble Shri Justice
B. N GOKHALE

PUBLISHED FOR DR. D. K. KARVE
CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE

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To
BAYA

Preface

ONE of the many objects which the Standing Committee of the Dr. D. K. Karve Centenary Celebrations had set its heart on accomplishing during the Centenary Year was the publication of a biography of Maharshi Karve in English. It decided to entrust the work to Shri G. L. Chandavarkar, Principal, Ram Mohan English School, and the Committee is glad that he has completed the same within time so as to enable the committee to publish this biography on the day Bharat Ratna Karve completes 100 years of his noble life.

The Committee is grateful to the Hon'ble Shri Justice P. B. Gajendragadkar, Judge of the Supreme Court, for the Introduction he has been kind enough to write to the biography. Lady Premlila Thackersey, Vice-Chancellor of the S.N.D.T. Women's University, who has been so closely associated with the work of Dr. Karve in connection with the University for years, has been also good enough to go through a part of this book while it was being written. The Committee must also express its sincere thanks to Prof. R. N. Welingkar who has taken pains to go through every chapter of the biography before it was sent to the press.

It was the desire of the Committee to make available to the public Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati translations of the biography at the time of the Centenary Celebrations, but that could not be done within the short time available after the work of writing was completed. The Committee is hopeful that it would be possible for the authorities of the S.N.D.T.

Women's University to complete this work in future.

The Committee trusts that this modest publication will serve as a source of inspiration to the present and future generations in appreciating the many aspects of Maharshi Karve's noble and memorable work in the field of social reform and women's education, which has undoubtedly played its part in the still unfinished work of the building up of a State based on principles of social justice, equality and welfare for which he has striven so ceaselessly and selflessly for the last seventy-five years of his long life.

Bombay,
18th April 1958

B. N. GOKHALE
Chairman,
Standing Committee

Introduction

"Providence should give me the will and the strength to devote myself to the cause of national regeneration of my choice as long as I am alive. It is likely that I may not live long enough to see the fulfilment of all my dreams. If there is any truth in the theory of rebirth, I would wish to be born again in this country and dedicate myself once more to the achievement of the cause of women's regeneration. It is only after the said cause has completely triumphed that I would cheerfully give up this mundane existence and be one with Providence." Thus prayed Dhondo Keshav Karve at the end of his autobiography on the 4th of September 1915. This ardent and inspiring prayer speaks more eloquently than any other words can of the dedication of Dr. Karve's life to the regeneration of women. "Blessed is he who has found his work";—said Carlyle "let him ask no other blessedness." Judged by this test Karve's life must be regarded as one of the few really blessed lives in the history of modern India.

" अतिदीर्घे जीविते को रमेत । "—"Who would love to live a long and weary life?" a cynic had asked in ancient Upanishadic times.

" कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः । " "One should cheerfully hope to live for a hundred years discharging one's duties" is the confident and instructive answer given by the Ishavasyopanishad to this cynical query. The dedicated life of Karve which looks as youthful as ever on the date of its cen-

tenary affords a glorious illustration of the Upanishadic injunction.

The story of Karve's life is depicted by Mr. Chandavarkar's able pen in twenty-four chapters. It has been divided conveniently into four parts and the attractive captions given to each chapter picturesquely describe the development of Karve's career and activities from stage to stage. Mr. Chandavarkar's style is simple, direct and forceful. He has used his material with the skill of an artist and I have no doubt that all readers of this life will agree with me that the saga of Karve's career as disclosed in the pages of this book would sustain their interest and admiration from start to finish. Karve's life is literally a modern saga of devotion to the cause of social reform in general and female education in particular It is fascinating and inspiring to read the story of Karve's life. Indeed, every page of the present biography speaks for the singleness of purpose which actuated Karve's career and his passionate pursuit of the cause nearest his heart. A hundred years would appear to be a fairly long span of life but the story of Karve's life would show how even this long span of hundred years has been literally crowded with so many activities of social reform and national service.

A simple unvarnished statement of his activities will bear out the truth of my statement.

Born on the 18th of April 1858 at Sheravali, Karve had to fight against adverse circumstances in his early years of education. In 1869 the Marathi Sixth Standard was recognized as the first public examination which was held either in Bombay or at District places. Young Karve and his companions at Murud made a valiant but futile attempt to go to Bombay to appear at the said examination. The journey to Bombay had to be made via the creek at Anjarla and just when the journey would have begun heavy showers of rain and storm offered an insurmountable obstacle. Not daunted by this depressing experience the youthful group of ambitious students undertook the unsafe and tedious journey to Satara and covered on foot the long distance of a hundred and ten miles in four days. The party reached Satara just on the day when the examination was to begin; but when Karve present-

ed himself before the Chairman, he rejected his application for permission to appear at the examination on the ground that his puny figure showed that he could not have completed the prescribed age of sixteen years. This incident in Karve's life brings out two remarkable features in his character. Once Karve decided to achieve any object the difficulties in the way and the arduous efforts which may be necessary to achieve the object never disheartened him; and even if ultimate success did not smile on him his spirit was never damped. He cheerfully looked ahead and went on his pilgrimage of life undeterred and fully determined to pursue his goal. That is exactly what he did in spite of the feeling of frustration which overtook him when he was not allowed to appear at the Sixth Standard Examination at Satara.

Gradually and almost inevitably young Karve found himself in Bombay in a few years. Scholarships which he secured and a number of tuitions which he undertook helped him on his way to the Matriculation Examination. During these days Karve came into contact with Narahar Balkrishna Joshi and these two young men faced several difficulties, lived a frugal life of sustained endeavour and perseverance and completed their college education solely by their personal efforts. Karve became a Graduate in 1884 with mathematics as his special subject; and that was the creditable end of the student career of the young lad who had gone to Bombay for his education from the distant and backward village of Murud.

Karve then became a teacher, for he loved teaching and educating healthy young minds. A part-time job in the Cathedral Girls' High School and the Alexandra Girls' High School and numerous private tuitions saw Karve busy from 4-30 in the morning until late at night every day. Even whilst he was incessantly busy with his daily schedule of work, Karve always had the vision of social service before his eye. That is why as a teacher he joined Rajaramshastri Bhagwat in his Maratha High School. Then it seemed to Karve that he would devote the whole of his life to education and may have to make Bombay the headquarters of his activities; but destiny had willed otherwise.

In 1891 Karve received a cordial and unexpected call from Gopala Krishna Gokhale of the Fergusson College to join the stalwarts of Poona who had founded the Deccan Education Society. Meanwhile the sad bereavement of his wife, Radhabai, had cast a shadow on Karve's life and so, with the blessings of Rajaramshastri Bhagwat, Karve decided to make a change in his life and joined the band of devoted workers at the Fergusson College, no doubt with some diffidence and not without hesitation. Karve worked in the Fergusson College for twenty-three long years from 1891 to 1914. It is during this period that Karve found his mission in life and gradually began his efforts in the cause of women's regeneration.

On the 11th of March 1893, the widower Karve showed his firm determination to espouse the cause of widow remarriage by marrying Godubai who had gone through long suffering as a young Hindu widow. Godubai was later affectionately called Baya and she proved to be a source of strength and inspiration to him in all his social activities until she died on the 29th of Nov. 1950. This remarriage naturally exposed both Karve and his wife to social opposition, ridicule and almost excommunication. On the 31st of December 1893, Karve took part in founding the Widow Remarriage Association with six other founder-members at Wardha. All his spare time and his vacations Karve used for popularising the ideal of this Association. On the 14th of June 1896, Anatha Balikashram Association was formed by Karve with 15 other colleagues. This institution was modelled on the lines of the Home for Widows which had been started in Bengal by Babu Shashipād Bannerjee in 1887 and another similar organization started by Viresalingam Pantulu in Madras. This was followed by the Anatha Balikashram which began its career in 1900 in a small hut constructed at Hingne on the outskirts of Poona. Eight young widows and three unmarried girls were the first inmates of this Ashram. What strain and suffering were involved in starting and conducting this institution at Hingne cannot be properly appreciated by any of us today. The cause of widows' education was extremely unpopular and apathy for social reform based on ignorance and super-

stition was then the order of the day. But this frail-looking man who had launched upon his career of social service was made of sterner stuff and the more difficulties confronted him the greater were his indomitable will and determination which met the challenge, how successfully we all know today. The place where this modest but historical hut was built by Karve has now become a place of pilgrimage for all lovers of female education in this country. Around this hut has now grown an imposing and inspiring network of a number of institutions devoted to the cause of female education. Seven years after the foundation of the Anatha Balikashram, Karve opened another chapter in his life by starting Mahila Vidyalaya on the 4th of March 1907. This school began with six students on its roll and its appearance witnessed the epoch of modern education of women in Poona and in Maharashtra. Major Hunter Steen wrote an article in the Times of India on the 14th of March 1908, praising the work of this Institution in words that sound almost prophetic: "In a small house in Narayan Peth in Poona City, not far from Lakdipool," wrote Major Steen, "is to be found a tiny beginning at least on this side of India of what will one day prove the social regeneration of the country." Karve was not content with all these activities and he thought that effective social work could be carried on only by persons who were prepared to take a missionary vow of social service and so was born the Nishkam Karma Math on the 4th of November 1908. Whoever joined this Math had to take a vow that he renounced all claims and rights to what he called his own, that he would from the moment of initiation belong to the Math and that he would willingly accept whatever provision the Math would make for him and for his family. Two other colleagues joined him in this Math. In 1914, Karve retired from the Fergusson College and he decided to utilise his freedom by devoting the whole of his time to the cause of social service. Vānaprastha which according to ancient Hindu concept, is an important stage in every individual's life assumed full meaning and significance in Karve's life, since from this time onwards, Karve's career was wholly dedicated to the cause of society. Soon thereafter, Karve was called

upon to preside over the session of Social Reform Conference in Bombay in 1915. In August 1915, Karve received a pamphlet about the Japanese Women's University which had been started in 1900 in Japan. This pamphlet attracted Karve's attention and with his vision he immediately conceived the grand and noble idea of starting a Women's University in Maharashtra. With characteristic vigour and enthusiasm he set about his plan. The Hindu Widows Home Association, he thought, could take upon itself the task of establishing a Women's University. His colleagues were, however, not very sympathetic and were very reluctant to give response to his call. But Karve was used to travel alone in the pursuit of his ideal first before help and cooperation came from friends and sympathisers in all causes undertaken by him. He carried on his propaganda in support of his idea of starting the Women's University. He expounded this scheme in his presidential address at the Social Reform Conference held in Bombay in December 1915 and, as usual, his efforts succeeded with the result that, on the 3rd and 4th of June 1916, the first meeting of the Senate of the Women's University was held and the new College actually began its work on the 6th of July 1916. Karve, who was then nearing 60 became the first Principal of this College at the request of all his colleagues and fellow workers. Six girl students were enrolled in the College in the first term. Later on, Karve fortunately received a munificent donation from Sir Vithaldas Thackersey and the authorities of the College were substantially relieved from financial worries for some time. That is how the Women's University came to be known as "Shrimati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women's University." It is now universally recognized that Karve succeeded in giving a reorientation to the pattern of women's education and has helped to carry out the ideal of bringing about a healthy regeneration of his sisters and daughters all over the country. After the University was started, Karve moved up and down the country to collect funds, to popularise the idea represented by the University and to start new schools affiliated to the University.

At this stage, social apathy to Karve's activities began to

yield place to genuine appreciation and admiration for the faith and determination shown by him in the pursuit of his ideal. The Poona Municipality honoured him by giving his name to the road that leads to Yerandavana. When he was past 70, Karve faced the risk of a journey abroad. For 15 months, he toured several countries in the West and collected funds for the Women's University. In 1942, the Banaras Hindu University conferred a Doctorate on him. Karve was not, however, satisfied with what he had done in the cause of female education. He now turned his attention to the problem of general education amongst villagers and founded the Maharashtra Village Primary Education Society in 1936. Under his inspiring guidance, this Society worked for nearly twelve years and started several schools in villages. The cause of general education led him to the still higher cause of social equality and on the 1st of January 1944, Karve started the Samatā Sangh. He then began to publish a monthly bulletin espousing the cause of social equality. Karve realised that social equality could not be firmly established unless caste system was vigorously attacked and that led to the foundation of the Caste Abolition Society in 1948. In 1953, Karve inaugurated the first session of the revived Social Reform Conference at Poona. It was my good fortune to have presided over this session of the Conference. Indeed I had agreed to accept the responsibility solely because Karve had asked me to do so, and a request from Karve I treated as a command. The words which Karve uttered on that occasion from the platform of the Social Reform Conference made an irresistible appeal to all the progressive elements in the country. Karve referred to the stalwarts who had led the social reform movement in early days and in a voice full of emotion he said, "I am the only one left behind, the only surviving representative of a past generation. I have held in my solitary hand the torch of social reform which was left by them. I am now too old to hold it any longer. I have therefore come here to hand it over to you." Karve was then 93 years old and yet the remarkable physical energy, intellectual alertness and emotional awareness of the needs of the hour which he then showed were the envy of

much younger men. From now on Karve came to be looked upon as a venerable institution by all sections of the public throughout the country. He attained the position of a respected Saint to whom the public looked for inspiration and guidance. Doctorates were conferred upon him by the Poona University in 1953 and by his own University in 1955. The honour of Padma Vibhushan came his way in 1955, a Doctorate from Bombay University in 1957 and, last and the most important, Karve became Bharat Ratna on the 26th of January 1958.

This bare recital of the several institutions founded, nursed and fostered by Karve shows how his life has been literally crowded with continuous activities of social service and usefulness. It is no wonder that the whole country gratefully looks upon him as a modern Saint and loves to call him 'Maharshi Karve.'

When we pay homage to Karve on the date of the Centenary of his birth we ought to appreciate the idea which he represents and the ideal which his life embodies. Karve realised very early in his career that education is the most powerful agent of human civilization and is in fact the chief weapon in the armoury of democracy for spreading a sense of proper social values. What Mill described as the 'deep slumber of settled opinions' can be effectively challenged only by the spread of education. Hostility to social reform proceeds from superstition and ignorance, and it cannot be conquered so long as our masses remain ignorant. Karve was fully conscious of the great truth that social progress can be measured with precision by the social position of the female sex. He saw all around him that women's domestic life proved to be a daily sacrifice amidst a thousand insignificant trifles. Most of them were absolutely illiterate and all of them were content to live their life of social inferiority. The unfortunate position of women in Hindu society led to the dualism of an educated man and an ignorant woman and this dualism in turn inevitably lowered the level of domestic life, and had repercussions on the individual and social character. Obviously amongst women of the day, the lot of widows was indescribably tragic. That is why Karve first devoted his atten-

tion to the betterment of the widows' position and their education and general regeneration. Vivekananda used to say that the principal object of religion must be to wipe the tears of helpless widows and unfortunate orphans. Judged by this test, Karve's life is essentially religious as he has done phenomenal work by rendering great service to the cause of Hindu widows. Karve believed that the cause of social reform cannot succeed unless persons who speak in favour of reform actually practise their principles in individual and corporate life. Karve set an example by marrying a widow and incurred great social displeasure. When he felt that it was time to take the next step in his plan of social service, he turned his attention to the cause of women's education in general. After a lapse of nearly fifty years it is really not easy for us to realize what an uphill task Karve had to accomplish in the matter of female educaion in those days. Education of women and re-marriage of widows were topics on which the orthodox society held strong views and always adopted an aggressively militant attitude. Unlike many social reformers of those days Karve did not believe in adopting superior tone while addressing the general public. He knew that the hostility of the general public was based on ignorance and it is only by spread of education and a cultivation of a proper sense of social values that reformers can hope to carry society with them. In 1893, when Karve's efforts to spread female education were very severely and uncharitably criticised by the orthodox section of the Press, Karve remained calm and unperturbed; he explained his social philosophy in words that speak volumes for his saintly spirit. "I have remarried", he said, "deliberately and my whole effort is to make widow remarriage popular. I must, however, take the precaution of keeping as much contact as possible with the whole of the society to which I belong and must not use any words which would unnecessarily offend social susceptibilities. If my society chooses to victimise me I must carefully submit to that treatment in the hope and with the prayer that after a lapse of time society itself would feel sorry for the treatment meted out to me and would begin to appreciate my principles and would ultimately accept them".

These words recall to one's mind the essential features of the Gandhian view of life which has now become our proud national treasure. Karve also firmly believed that if social reform was preached and practised in a proper way, its opponents who then mustered strong to scoff would ultimately remain to pray. Having played his part with remarkable success in evolving schemes of female education, Karve took up the responsibility of starting educational institutions in villages and thus attacked the problem of general education. In pursuing this object, Karve had steadily kept before himself the ideal of social equality. He knew that the doctrine of social equality cannot succeed so long as the vicious caste system held its sway in Hindu society. The caste system divides the society into water-tight compartments, creates a social hierarchy, develops a sense of social superiority and inferiority and inevitably breeds a sense of narrow loyalty within the limits of several castes. The clear and logical mind of Karve realised that unless this caste-consciousness was completely annihilated, it would be impossible to establish social equality in this country; and so, though age was growing on him and his physical powers showed faint traces of decline, he took active part in founding the Caste Abolition Society and in preaching the doctrine of social equality in the monthly bulletin issued by him. It is obvious that social equality cannot be effectively established merely by the force of law. There is no doubt that law under the democratic way of life can and must be used as a dynamic weapon in establishing social and economic justice. But though the arm of law may be proverbially long, it would not succeed completely in achieving its object in social matters unless it receives the full and wholehearted cooperation from the public at large. Social prejudices based on superstition and ignorance can be attacked by law; but their annihilation cannot be achieved solely on the strength of law. In the crusade against ignorance and superstition enlightened public opinion must play its legitimate part, and that is where social reformers must join and help the dynamic process of democratic laws. In his inaugural address delivered at the revived session of the Social Reform Conference in Poona, Karve spoke ruthlessly about the menace

of social and economic inequality. "We have political freedom in its fullness", he observed, "and yet we are weak and poor and devoid of moral force—why are we so? The only answer I find is because we have totally ruled out social equality, unity and fraternity from our thoughts, aspirations and efforts". Karve spoke with reverence about the brave fight for freedom which Gandhiji and his followers so valiantly carried on and referred to the advent of freedom with emotional fervour; but he ventured to express his opinion that sometimes he felt that freedom had come to us before we had earned and deserved it by our own efforts. Then he addressed himself to the younger generation in this country and, "Strive to remove all caste distinctions; let a term like 'Harijan' be a thing of the past; let there be no inequality between men and women; let the ideal of welfare of all creatures— सर्वभूतहितवाद —,preached by our ancient scriptures be our ideal and our call today." It is to this call so passionately made by the modern saint of Maharashtra that the country must respond today. The sincerity of our admiration, respect and reverence for Maharshi Karve would be judged by history in the light of the efforts we make to remove social inequality from our country and to help our democracy to attain its ideal of securing to all its citizens social and economic justice.

11, Tughalak Road,
New Delhi. P. B. GAJENDRAGADKAR
21-3-58

Acknowledgment

THIS is the story of the life of a simple man who has risen to greatness without being aware of it in the least. It is told by one who can make no claim to being a writer. He could not have told it without inspiration and help.

Most of the inspiration came to him from the hero of the legend himself—from his *Atma-vritta* and *Looking Back,* from his words and the reminiscences he sometimes narrated, and even more than these, from his saintly figure which stood before the writer's eyes while every word of this narrative was being written.

I have drawn freely from the memoirs of Anandibai Karve and Parvatibai Athavale. The *Ashram-Kanyaka* written and published by Varubai Shevade provided the subject-matter of almost a whole chapter. I am deeply indebted to the gifted author of this little book.

Bhaskarrao Karve stood by me and gave me his time and much valuable information. He furnished many facts and details. He placed at my disposal all the papers in his possession. With great care and in minute detail he read the manuscript. From Professor N. M. Athavale I received all the help I needed. I was allowed to read the manuscript of the chapters which Professor N. M. Patwardhan has added to the latest edition of the *Atma-vritta.* These gave me valuable information about Maharshi Karve's life after 1935. I wish to express my grateful appreciation to all three of them.

I cannot thank Professor R. N. Welingkar—for whom I

have the same reverence as for a teacher—enough for his help and guidance. He read the manuscript and offered much constructive criticism which, I gratefully acknowledge, I have accepted. It is he who kept me straight on several points in the actual writing of the book.

Principal G. C. Bannerjee of the Elphinstone College, was kind enough to give some valuable facts about Maharshi Karve's career at the Elphinstone College.

Mr. G. N. Chikmath's help in reading the proofs and preparing the Index has been invaluable. I deeply appreciate his untiring services.

Several friends sent me their reminiscences about Maharshi Karve. I have made as much use of them as I could. I am indebted to them all.

To the Dr. D. K. Karve Centenary Celebration Committee who asked me and gave me the opportunity to write this book I acknowledge my great debt of gratitude.

It is in accordance with Maharshi Karve's own wish that this story of his life is dedicated to Baya.

Bombay,
April 4, 1958 G. L. CHANDAVARKAR

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PART I

1

The Glory That Did Not Fade

THE little town of Murud was astir with enthusiasm. Large numbers of brahmins had gathered in the market-place to go to the house which was the temporary residence of the representative of the Maharaja Gaikwad of Baroda. He had come on behalf of his master to distribute *dakshiṅās*[1] to brahmins.

They went to the house. It was buzzing with activity. Everyone of them came out with a *dakshiṅā* of ten rupees.

Bhiku and Dhondu, two brothers, were playing in the open space in front of their small house. Bhiku was four years older and had his *upanayan*[2] performed.

One of their friends came running.

"Did you hear this, Bhiku? The Maharaja is distributing *dakshiṅās* to brahmins. Look at them. How happy they are! Everyone of them has got ten rupees."

"Ten rupees!" Bhiku exclaimed, "It can't be true."

"My uncle told me so. How do you say that it can't be true?"

"Does everyone get the *dakshṅā?*" Bhiku asked.

"Everyone who has his *upanayan* performed", was the reply. "Why don't you go too, Bhiku? You'll surely come

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1 *dakshiṅā* gift given to a brahmin at a religious ceremony or in recognition of his learning.

2 *upanayan*: investiture with the sacred thread—a religious ceremony by which a boy is initiated and sent to the house of the teacher for education.

back with ten rupees."

Bhiku began to wonder. After a few seconds, he ran inside. He went to the kitchen where his mother was cooking.

"Mother," Bhiku cried, "come out and see. The brahmins are receiving *dakshiṅās* from a rich man. Fancy each one getting ten rupees!"

"I know all about it, Bhiku," said his mother, "Now, go out and play, and don't disturb me in my work."

"But, mother," asked Bhiku, "why shouldn't I get the *dakshiṅā*? They say that anyone who performs *sandhya*[1] is entitled to the gift. I can also get it if I go."

"My child, it is not proper for us to beg," replied the mother.

"Beg?" said Bhiku, "We don't have to beg!"

"The Maharaja is giving *dakshiṅā* and those who receive it are but supplicants."

"Mother, don't you see that so many brahmins are receiving the *dakshiṅā*?"

"We are not like them," Mother said in a firm voice. "Bhiku, my boy, you are born in the highly respected family of the Karves. Your forefathers were highly placed and were renowned for their great wealth. Your father is not rich today, but he was at one time. We are fallen on bad days. We have, however, not lost our family prestige, nor can we ever forget the family pride. Your maternal uncle, who is a *dasha-granthi*[2] brahmin, never stoops to receive a *dakshiṅā*."

"But, mother, the man who is distributing the *dakshiṅā* is not an ordinary person. He's a Maharaja—the Maharaja of Baroda!" Bhiku felt sure that his mother could have nothing to say on this, but the proud woman retorted with dignity,

"Yes, he's a Maharaja and he belongs to a family of rulers who were not long ago debtors of the Karves. The Maharaja owes to your family lakhs of rupees which are yet to be repaid."

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1 *Sandhya*: daily worship performed by a brahmin in the morning, at noon and in the evening.

2 *dasha-granthi*—a brahmin who has studied the ten great religious treatises.

Bhiku was astonished to hear this. He was sorely disappointed. He could not help feeling that if his father, who was at Koregaon, had been present, he would surely have allowed him to go and receive the *dakshiṅā*. Kesopant returned the next day. When he was told of what had happened, he consoled his son by telling him that what his mother had said was right. Kesopant felt proud of his wife's dignified decision.

Dhondu, the younger boy, heard and saw all this. He kept it carefully in his mind.

Poona was the seat of the government of the Marathas under the Peshwas. It, therefore, attracted men of enterprise from all quarters and especially from the Konkan. Among these were two brothers, Keshavbhat Karve and his younger brother, Raghunathbhat Karve. They opened a shop in Poona and soon established their reputation. The Peshwas themselves were among their customers. Keshavbhat was highly respected for his learning and had received from the Peshwas the gift of a village of the name of Hatnor. He was an *agnihotri*[1] and was invited to officiate at religious ceremonies. Raghunathbhat was more practical and was very clever in business. He managed the business almost by himself, but so great was his loyalty to his elder brother that he ran the shop in his name. By their honesty and industry, they amassed a large fortune. They and their two partners had advanced a loan of six and a half lakhs of rupees to the Maratha chief, Damaji Gaikwad. There is also a record of another loan given by the same party to another Maratha chief, Janoji Bhosla of Nagpur.

A large property was purchased by the two Karve brothers at Murud, their home-town. There they built a spacious mansion for their family. The village tank which cost Rs. 6,500 and the temple of Durgadevi, the pride of Murud, were their gifts to the town. Keshavbhat had no child of his own. So he adopted Raghunathbhat's son, Naropant. Bapunana, Raghunathbhat's youngest son, was the grandfather of

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1 *agnihotri*: a brahmin who maintains the sacred fire in his house by offering oblations to it regularly.

Dhondo Keshav Karve. Bapunana and his eldest son, Sakharampant, found it difficult to maintain the prosperity built up by the two Karve brothers. When, in later years, Sakharampant and his two brothers, Keshav (better known as Kesopant) and Ballal decided to have a division of the ancestral property, it was found that each had only a small piece of land which yielded an annual income of about thirty rupees, and the other property was not worth more than about fifty rupees. At the same time, however, each had to stand a liability of a hundred and five rupees of the debt which the family had to pay. In the same mansion in which their grandfather had counted more than five thousand *putlis* (gold coins) of his own, the three grandsons found that even the three *putlis* worn by their wives did not belong to the family, but were borrowed!

Kesopant, father of Dhondo Keshav, had seen something of the family's prosperity in his childhood. He had also inherited and imbibed the aristocratic traits of the family but, unlike his elder brother, he found no difficulty in adapting himself to the changed fortunes. He took up a job as manager of the estate of a rich family of the name of Barve in the neighbouring village of Koregaon. Before he wound up his affairs at Murud and went to Koregaon, Kesopant respectfully suggested to Sakharampant that it would be for the good of all concerned that he should live more wisely and not add to the liabilities of the family any more.

Kesopant Karve's wife, Lakshmibai, was the daughter of Kesopant Paranjpye of Sheraoli. The outward pomp of the Karves of Murud still lingered at the time of Kesopant's marriage, but the young bride did not take long to realise that things were actually different. Nor was she slow in reconciling herself to the real state of affairs. To her husband who had made up his mind to put up a brave fight, she gave full and loyal co-operation. Kesopant lived alone at Koregaon. He saved whatever he could from his petty income of twenty-five rupees a year. This income and what little he could get from the piece of land at Murud enabled him, on account of his frugal habits, to pay off the family debt before long. Lakshmibai lived at Sheraoli and there she

became the most useful member of a large household. In a few years they were not only free from all liabilities but were able to have a small house of their own at Murud. This house cost Kesopant four hundred rupees. When the three children, Bhiku, Dhondu and Amba grew up and the two boys were of school-going age, Kesopant's wife moved with the children to this new house at Murud. She had six children, but the first three had died, one after another, in infancy. Poverty and sorrow combined to give Kesopant and his wife a severe training. With brave hearts and with remarkable skill, they created happiness for themselves and their three children in spite of their difficulties and the very slender means they had. As the children grew, the household had more comforts but the old habits of industry and economy were never given up. Even the children became accustomed to hard work and to austere living. In the midst of their hardships and difficulties, the pride of the Karves—continued to burn like a flame before the eyes of Kesopant and Lakshmibai and in their hearts. They passed it on to their children.

Prof. Karve regards himself as singularly fortunate in having been born of such parents. He has gratefully acknowledged that their character and behaviour have left a permanent mark on his own and that of his brother and his sister. His father, Kesopant, was a man of very quiet temperament and resolute and relentless. His mother was an ideal Hindu woman and had certain qualities which are rarely found even in a woman known to possess the best traits of the Hindu character. At a Hindu wedding there is none more highly honoured than the bridegroom's mother. On the occasion of Dhondu's wedding, his mother so laid aside her honoured position that she pleaded guilty to the bride's people for a small omission and even suffered the penance of striking her cheeks with her own hand.

Dhondo Keshav Karve was born on *Vaisakh Shuddh* 5, *Shak*, 1780, which was April 18, 1858. The year 1858 A.D. is a memorable one in the history of India. The reconstruction and consolidation of what subsequently came to be known as British India became complete in 1858. It was the result of the establishment of one government, one administration and

a uniform and modern system of education in the country. It was in this year that, on the morrow of the momentous happenings of 1857, Lord Canning, the Governor-General and first Viceroy, made the declaration so full of portents of the years to come: "I will *not* govern in anger. Justice, and that as stern, inflexible as law and might can make it, I will deal out. But I will never allow an angry and indiscriminate act or word to proceed from the Government so long as I am responsible for it." The Queen's Proclamation of November 1, 1858, proved that these were not empty words. With 1858, therefore, began a new era, with a new policy which can be expressed in no better words than the following with which the Proclamation concluded:

"In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment and in their gratitude, our best reward."

As Prof. Rushbrook Williams has observed, "After 1857 the position became by slow degrees reversed. The demand for progress arose not from Government but from the people."

As the Nineteenth Century came to a close, it became evident that even though the uprising of 1857 was a failure, it had left a deep impression upon the situation in the country and, indeed, had so influenced the course of events that educated Indians increasingly began to realise that their future lay more or less in their own hands. They also realised that although the British were alien, they need not be looked upon as political adversaries. They had brought with them a wide outlook and fresh ideas which were spreading among the people they ruled. If rightly used, these invaluable assets may prove successful in winning freedom for their country. Not without a prophetic vision did Sir Charles Metcalfe express his hope—or was it his fear?—"I expect to wake up one fine day and find India lost to the English Crown." That fine day did dawn ninety years later. These ninety years comprise one of the most remarkable periods of Indian history for they produced men who built institutions and shaped events to give to the country her freedom for which the price of strenuous effort and immeasurable sacrifice had to be paid. The year 1858 and its two immediate predecessors gave birth to events of national importance and they also brought forth

men who led their countrymen on the new paths they cut out. Among these men so brought forth was one, the only one still living, who has marched through the long and momentous years with the torch-light of reform in one hand and with the alms-bowl in the other. He belongs to that group of pioneers of the early days who felt the urge for reform from within. The year 1858 is noted in India's history for the Queen's Proclamation. It is noted also for another event, no less significant, the birth of the emancipator of Indian womanhood, Dhondo Keshav Karve, who first saw the light of day on April 18 of that year.

Although Professor Dhondo Keshav Karve was born at Sheraoli in the house of his maternal grandfather, he looks upon Murud as his home town. He has described Murud in his autobiography as one of the few healthy spots on the south Konkan coast. The same town has produced during the last century other prominent men who have left behind the impact of their lives and character on the happenings of the last hundred years. Foremost among them was Rao Bahadur Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik. He was a lawyer of the first rank and served the Bombay Municipality for many years with distinction. He was also the first Indian to be nominated as a member of the Governor-General's Legislative Council. Vaman Abaji Modak was another son of Murud who brought glory to his home town. He belonged to the first batch of graduates of the University of Bombay which also included Dr. Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, the Oriental Scholar of international renown, and Madhav Govind Ranade, one of the pioneers of the social reform movement in the country. Mr. Modak was an eminent educationist and had the distinction of being the first Indian principal of the Elphinstone High School, a Government institution in Bombay. Professor Karve cherishes with pride the memories of these and other prominent persons who belonged to Murud.

2

Childhood

"I won't eat unless you give me what I want."

"Dhondu," said his mother, "Don't be naughty. I will give you grains of *kadwa*[1], nicely fried, tomorrow. Don't you see how busy I am just now?"

"No, no, that won't do." Dhondu was adamant. "I must have them or . . . "

"Very well, take these and please yourself." Mother took a few grains and, putting them into a spoon, held it over the fire for a few seconds. The grains were just half-fried, but Dhondu was quite satisfied.

The tender hearts of Dhondu's mother and father were full of affection for their children. They hardly spoke a harsh word to Dada, Dhondu or Amba and the three children also rarely gave them cause for being harsh. Dhondu at times was naughty when he did not get what he wanted. Mother did her best to please him. When he did not listen to her, Atmya's help was sought. Atmya was an old servant. He alone could make the children behave.

At the Shenvi Pantoji's School, Dhondu learnt his alphabet. There he also cultivated the habit of learning by heart and reciting loudly and with a flawless accent verses from the works of mediaeval poets—*aryas,*[2] *shlokas*[3] and *bhoopalis.*[4]

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1 *Kadwa*—a kind of pulse.

2 *aryā*—an Indian metre of Sanskrit origin.

3 *shlokas*—an Indian metre of Sanskrit origin.

4 *bhoopali*—hymn sung in the morning.

His sweet and clear voice made him popular in the school. This talent was probably one of the factors which attracted the attention of teachers like Mr. Vinayak Lakshman Soman of the Government Primary School at Murud which Dhondu joined after spending a few months at the Shenvi Pantoji's School. Mr. Soman's heart was full of love for his pupils, and he had a particularly soft corner for those who were devoted to their studies. In Dhondu he found such a pupil.

In 1869, Dhondu appeared for the Marathi fourth standard examination, but was unsuccessful. The failure filled him with remorse, but Mr. Soman gave him comfort and cheered him up. As a result of the encouragement he had from his teacher, Dhondu appeared again for the examination and this time he was successful. After this his progress was uninterrupted and soon he completed the studies for the sixth standard examination which was the public examination. It was held only in bigger towns.

There was an English school at Dapoli which was about six miles from Murud. Pupils who had passed the Marathi fourth standard examination could get admission to this school: It was Dhondu's passionate desire to go to Dapoli to learn English, but he decided to stand aside so that Dada may have a chance. Dada went to Dapoli but did not stay there long. Shortly after Dada left Dapoli, the school itself was closed down. Dhondu's ambition to learn English thus remained unfulfilled for a time. He continued to learn whatever he could at home.

The subject Dhondu loved most was Mathematics. He was fortunate enough to get from Ravjishastri Deokule, a teacher of Mathematics in the Men's Training College, his notes on the subject. These notes enabled Dhondu to master the subject, and the knowledge he acquired stood him in good stead later. Dada had accepted the job of a teacher in a primary school in a village in the Khed taluka. According to the revised rules, it was necessary for a primary teacher to appear for the public examination of the sixth standard before he was made permanent. Dada came home on leave to prepare for the examination. Dhondu helped him in his studies and, therefore, it was not necessary for him to join

a school.

Learning in school or at home and preparing for the examinations were not the only pursuits which kept Dhondu busy. He performed the worship of the family deity every day. It was a fairly long drawn-out process. He devoted some time every day to the reading of puranas and such works as *Rama-Vijaya, Hari-Vijaya, Shiva Leelamrit* and *Gurucharitra*. There were occasions when the *Shiva Leelamrit* or the *Gurucharitra* was recited as a form of prayer or invocation of blessings from God. On the day Dada appeared for the public examination, Dhondu read the *Shiva Leelamrit* as a prayer for his success. These daily and occasional readings gave Dhondu's mind and outlook on life a religious background which gave him inspiration and guided him in the various tasks he undertook in later life. As he looks back, Maharshi Karve remembers with gratitude those early years and the shape they gave to his thoughts and aspirations.

Whenever there was a feast to mark the conclusion of a religious ceremony, Dhondu was asked to recite *shlokas* which he did with remarkable effect. His love of music drew him to any occasion where he had an opportunity to listen to good music or to see a good play. From a *Hari-keertan*, where devotional music was the fare, to the *tamasha*—a combination of folk dance and folk-song, he was seen everywhere. Sometimes a dramatic company visited Murud or the nearby village of Harnai or the more distant town of Dapoli. For Dhondu the distance did not matter. He walked three miles to see a dramatic performance at Harnai or six miles to go to Dapoli for the same purpose. One day, Dada and a number of friends went to Dapoli to see a play. Dhondu could not join them. He had seen one performance given by the same Company. He was therefore asked to stay behind. There was a *Shashthi-poojan*[1] ceremony at the house of Mr. Barve, his father's employer. It was necessary for someone to represent the family at the ceremony and Dhondu was asked to do so. Dhondu's heart was filled with sadness

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1 *Shashthi-poojan*—religious ceremony performed when the child is six days old.

but he would not miss the opportunity. After the ceremony and the dinner late at night, he joined a belated group of persons who walked up all the way to Dapoli and saw the play.

A feast was given at the house of Mr. Mandlik to mark the conclusion of a religious ceremony. All brahmins in the town were invited. It was a great day for Dhondu. This was the first occasion of its kind since he had his *upanayan* ceremony performed and, therefore, he was not only invited but, as an initiated brahmin, was also entitled to receive the *dakshiṇā* of four annas. He took his sister, Amba, with him. Dhondu got four annas but to Amba only an anna was given. In his boyish boastfulness, Dhondu would have liked his mother to know of his superiority over his sister. So he said to Amba,

"Give that coin to me. You might drop it on the way."

"I know how to be careful, Anna", said the girl, "You needn't worry."

When Dhondu pressed her, Amba saw through his motive. She was afraid he might snatch the coin from her hand. So when they reached as far as Mr. Barve's house, she ran inside. Maharshi Karve has narrated this incident in his *Atmavritta* (autobiography) as an illustration of his vanity which, as he remorsefully goes on to admit, was one of the traits of his boyish behaviour.

Tree-climbing and picking berries and mangoes from trees which belonged to others were the pastimes in which Dhondu heartily participated. During the rainy season, the village wells and tanks were full, and on Sundays swimming parties were organised by the grown-up men of Murud. They took boys with them and taught them how to swim. Dhondu went with them. One day a trick played by some of the elders gave him a fright. Instead of taking him to a tank, they took him to a deep well. After giving him a false promise that they would follow, they let him into the water alone. There was no rope to hold him or nothing else which could give him support. In a fit of nervousness, he struggled and felt certain that he would be drowned. As he went up and down, one of the men who were standing on the brink of the well took pity

on the poor boy and drew him out of the water. For several months after this incident, Dhondu could not get over his fright. Later, however, he did learn how to swim and even acquired a certain amount of skill in the art of swimming.

3

Early Struggle

MR. SOMAN, the teacher, found in Dhondu not only a diligent pupil but also a willing worker. He decided to give a full scope to his young disciple's exuberent energy and willingness to do any useful task. His friend, Mr. Pandurang Daji Bal, used to get several newspapers. Mr. Soman obtained them from Mr. Bal and, with Dhondu's assistance, organised a small reading circle at the Shri Durgadevi Temple. This was a notable experiment in social education. Dhondu took up the work with enthusiasm and attended to it with devotion. He read out the news in a clear voice and many gathered to listen. The experiment, in spite of its usefulness and early popularity, was short-lived.

The winding up of the reading circle did not damp Mr. Soman's zeal. He took up another project. This time it was a store on a co-operative basis. With Mr. Bal as Chairman and Mr. Govind Vinayak Gadre as Secretary, the Vyaparottejak Mandali was founded. Shares of the value of five rupees each were issued and a capital of rupees eight hundred was raised. The store was opened and was set up in the front room of the house of the Secretary of the Mandali, Mr. Gadre. Dhondu happened to be without any work at the time and he enjoyed the confidence of the chief promoter, Mr. Soman. He was chosen for the counter. Dhondu did the work of selling and keeping accounts with assiduous care, but sometimes he got himself lost in the mess of the figures he had to deal with in the Account Book and found it difficult

to extricate himself out of it. His teacher and employer was hardly any better in the task of keeping accounts. When Dhondu was away, Mr. Soman or Mr. Gadre sat at the counter and sold things. Probably that was how irregularities crept in. At the end of the year, it was found that the venture was a losing concern. They carried on for seven or eight months more. Mr. Soman was a cautious man, and he at once saw that it would be unwise to carry on further. With regret they decided to close down the shop. They were able to pay off the shareholders with great difficulty. The promoters themselves had to forego the money they had invested.

When Dhondu was employed, Mr. Soman had told him that he would be paid at the rate of three rupees per month. All that he received for nearly eighteen months was six rupees and four annas. Dhondu did not mind the cut but he was sorry that the undertaking was a failure which, he felt almost certain, was the result of his own carelessness. Taking the blame on himself, he thought of suffering self-imposed penalty for it. Dajiba Kane, one of the shareholders, had purchased five shares and therefore the promoters owed him twenty-five rupees. Dhondu approached Mr. Kane through his friend, Bhikajipant Vaishampayan, and requested him to accept a promissory note for twenty-five rupees. He undertook to pay the amount himself with interest. He then told Mr. Soman and the other promoters that as Mr. Kane had purchased on credit goods worth twenty-five rupees, they need not refund to him the amount they owed him for the shares. By entering into this agreement, Dhondu was able to save the amount of twenty-five rupees for his revered teacher. Mr. Kane knew that Dhondu Karve had no money, but he trusted him. Within a few years, Dhondu paid him from his earnings from tuitions which he did in Bombay. He paid Mr. Kane thirty rupees in all, the original sum with interest on it.

In 1869, the Marathi sixth standard examination was made the first public examination. An age limit was fixed for those who wished to appear for the examination. Dhondu had therefore to wait till he completed seventeen. The examination was held in Bombay or in district towns like Ratnagiri or Satara

It was September 1875. The rains had not subsided and made it difficult for the travellers from Murud to Ratnagiri to cross the many creeks that lay on the way. The journey was full of perils, and yet some boys from Murud were resolved to undertake it. Dondu was one of them.

The rains were unusually heavy and the creeks that lay between Ratnagiri and Murud became impassable. The boys decided to go to Bombay. They had to take a vessel which sailed from a creek at Anjarla which was about six miles from Murud. The party left Murud in the evening and reached the bank of the creek several hours before the vessel was about to sail. They anxiously waited for the time of its departure. At about nine at night, a terrible storm broke out. The creek soon became flooded. It was evident that it was impossible for the vessel to sail. With drooping hearts the boys waited. The storm continued with unabated fury till morning. And then, the boys turned their heavy footsteps homeward. The return journey was even more difficult as they had to cross a flooded creek near Murud. There was no other vessel going to Bombay and therefore the plan of going to Bombay was given up, but not the intention of appearing for the examination. If they could not go to Ratnagiri or to Bombay, they could go to Satara. This was the only alternative left. With only four days between them and the examination, the boys decided to walk a distance of a hundred and ten miles. It was by no means an easy task but nothing was too difficult for them.

Their elders did all they could to dissuade them from undertaking a perilous journey, but when they saw that the boys had set their hearts on it, they gave them permission. With their kit on their backs, they started. One of them lived at Karnde, two or three miles from Murud. When they went there, they learnt that his elders did not give him permission. They felt sorry for their friend. He went a little way with them, and when he was about to say good-bye and turn back, they asked him to proceed with them. Now that he was away from his home, the boy felt bold enough to go on, and he did, although he had not brought any kit. His elders were people of understanding. When they saw that

he did not return, they guessed that he must have gone on. They therefore sent his elder brother with his kit. He met the party at Kumbhe where they had halted for their lunch.

On the first day, they had travelled about thirty miles. Before day-break the next day, they reached Chiplun. The police officer at Chiplun belonged to Murud and he knew the boys well. He was kind to them. He found a horse for them to carry their kit and also asked the owner of the horse to go with them.

Their kit was simple and not very heavy. Each had a pair of dhotis, and two shirts. They wore coats and had a *roomal* tied round the head as head-gear. On their feet they had strong *chappals* or sandals which could withstand a journey of hundreds of miles on rugged roads. A rough blanket, known as *ghongdi,* served more than one purpose. At night, they spread it on the ground where they slept. They carried umbrellas, but something more was necessary when it rained heavily. The *ghongdi* could be used as a rain-coat. One thing none of them omitted to carry was the *sowale*—the holy garment which they had to wear while taking their meals. It was not difficult for them to carry the kit on their backs but they readily accepted the offer of the horse.

From Chiplun, Patan was about thirty-six miles and from there another thirty-six miles to reach Satara, and they had to cover this distance in less than two days. Fortunately the road from Chiplun onwards was a good one. And there was the owner of the horse to give them additional company. Refreshed in body and with renewed hope and vigour, they walked on. It was a race between time and their objective. At one in the afternoon the next day, they reached Patan. The headmaster of the local school heard about their arrival and went to meet them. He gave them courage and good advice. As the main road to Satara extended over a distance of thirty-six miles, he advised them to take a shorter route. This route, however, was more difficult. It lay through a valley, but they would be able to save a distance of twelve miles. The paramount thought in the minds of the boys was how they could reach Satara the next day. Their bodies were tired and their feet were sore with walking.

The proposal to take the shorter route, though it was a dangerous one, was too tempting to be rejected. The owner of the horse, however, protested. He pleaded that the horse was too tired and the journey through the valley was fraught with peril. With great difficulty the boys brought him round, and they started on what was the last lap of their journey. Impatience and anxiety increased in the minds of the young travellers at every step, but not in that of the horse. How was the poor animal to realise why it was necessary for it to walk faster than its drooping limbs allowed? The only person in the company who shared and supported the reluctance of the horse was its owner. The boys, on the other hand, did everything to make it walk faster—they beat it with their sticks, but even the cruel lashes could not goad it on. It was darkness everywhere when the party reached the middle of the valley. The path was narrow; on one side there was a lofty precipice and on the other a deep chasm. They could hardly see what lay a step ahead of them. To add to their woes, as it were, the horse collapsed and refused to move on. What was the horseman to do? He could not leave his animal there, but how could he stay in the lonely place all alone in the darkness of the night? The boys once again took their kit on their weary backs, and they all moved on, leaving the poor animal to darkness and probably to death. At about eleven at night, they reached a spot where there were a few huts which belonged to shepherds. The sight of these huts gave them courage and they halted for a little rest. They resumed their journey before sunrise, but this time the horseman refused to go further. They had no alternative but to pay him the full hire for the journey upto Satara, and he returned.

At about five in the evening the party reached Satara. That was the day on which the examination was to commence. The last glimmer of hope which still flickered in their hearts was about to vanish but they were told that on the first day the only thing that was done was to register the names of the candidates. Immediately on their arrival at Satara, they went to an acquaintance of theirs from Murud who was working as a clerk in the Collector's Office. He

took them to the Chairman of the Examination Committee. To their great delight they were told by him that he would gladly register their names the next morning. Even this assurance was enough to make the young adventurers forget all the hardships they had to suffer during the unforgettable journey. Refreshed after a night's good sleep, and with new hope, they all went to the examination hall the next morning.

They appeared before the Chairman, one by one. The Chairman took down their names and registered them as candidates for the examination. Dhondu's turn came and he stood before the Chairman.

"What is your age?" asked the Chairman looking at Dhondu with searching eyes.

"I have just completed seventeen years," the reply came. There was nervousness in the voice, because of the eyes which were fixed on him.

"No, I don't believe it," said the Chairman, "you look so small and so frail!"

Poor Dhondu was overcome with fear and despair. He had the age certificate given by the school with him, but the Chairman had no time to look at it.

"You can't be more than fifteen . . . "

"Please, Sir . . . " Dhondu made a desperate effort to say something.

"Don't take any more of my time. I can't admit you. Get away." So saying, the big officer turned to others.

Out of the five students who came from Murud, four were allowed to appear for the examination. Dhondu alone was refused admission because he looked too young! A feeling of acute despondency swept over his mind. He cursed himself a thousand times. What else could he do? He spent the whole day thinking about the future. The future! It was all bleak and barren. He was doomed to a life of failure and misery. How fortunate the other boys were! Why should fortune frown on him alone?

Did fortune frown on him alone? The other boys also found the next day that all the trouble they had taken to come to Satara, all the fatigue and hardships they had undergone during the terrible journey, were to be in vain. The

first day's paper was Arithmetic. Only those who passed in that paper were allowed to appear for the next day's paper. When Dhondu's four companions went to the examination hall the next morning, they were told that they had failed. Fortune did not frown on Dhondu alone.

There was nothing to keep the boys in Satara any longer. They collected their kit and what little of spirits was left in them and started on their homeward journey.

Youth and ambition, when they once clasp each other's hands, can hardly be separated. Dhondu was young and there was ambition in his young heart. Of course, his ambition was not very high. To pass the Public Examination and then be eligible for the Teacher's Training Certificate—that was all he desired. He waited for the next opportunity. The months rolled on and soon the date of the next year's examination approached. This time he could not think of going to Satara. Gangadharpant Karve, a cousin of his, who was older by about fourteen years, was to appear for the examination, and he had decided to go to Kolhapur for the purpose. Dhondu went with him. He was more fortunate this time. There was no hitch or obstacle, and he did quite well in all the papers. He was declared to have passed the examination.

As a child and as a full-grown youth, Dhondo Keshav Karve has had to pass through difficult tests—a long series of them. Even though he was, as he has confessed many a time, of a nervous temperament, his spirit was tough. Perhaps the tests themselves gave him the toughness of spirit, and every time, he stood the test with greater success. Dhondu was modest, but his capacity to work, to toil and to suffer was unlimited. In those early days, there was a deep longing within him to learn and to acquire knowledge. It was not backed by self-interest. He wanted to learn because knowledge was a thing which made man good. To be a good man and to do good things—that was his goal.

His thoughts about his future were humble. While he was at school and even later as a college student, the idea of doing great things, of winning fame, hardly crossed his mind. Experience taught him how to regard success as well as failures with indifference.

After his return from Satara and even before he passed the Public Examination, an opportunity to learn English presented itself to him. At seventeen, he knew not a word of English. No education was considered complete even in those days without some knowledge of English. Dhondu joined an English class which was started by Mr. Pandurang Daji Bal who was anxious that his younger brother should learn English. He made arrangements to have a teacher from Bombay. The teacher had completed his education upto the Matriculation Class, and was considered adequately qualified to conduct an English class for beginners. There was great enthusiasm in Murud over this new class. Mr. Karve looks upon the opportunity thus presented to him as a turning point in his life. Had it not been for this new venture which was started by his old benefactor, he would have considered the sixth standard examination as the ultimate goal of his educational career and would have found satisfaction in becoming a primary teacher. This is what he says in his autobiography. It would, therefore, be equally correct to say that the misfortune which greeted him at Satara proved a blessing in disguise—not only for him but for modern India and Indian womanhood as well.

For two years he learnt English with unbounded enthusiasm and completed three standards at the end of the period. It now became necessary for him to go either to Ratnagiri or to Bombay. He was prepared to go to any place and to liver under any conditions, but that was not all that was needed. How were the expenses to be met? His father, he thought, could not afford to pay for his stay in a place away from home. He kept quiet, keeping the desire to go out for further studies to himself. Kesopant, however, knew his son's aspirations, and decided to give him all encouragement. He even decided to take a loan from his brother-in-law in order to be able to send Dhondu to Ratnagiri. Dhondu's joy knew no bounds. He walked the whole distance to Ratnagiri, and joined the school there in the third standard. At Ratnagiri there was no relative with whom he could stay. For some time, he stayed in the house of Mr. Vaman Abaji Modak with his friend, Rambhau Joshi, who was a nephew of Mr.

Modak's. After about a month, he took a room and started going to a hotel for his meals.

In about two months, the annual examination was held. Dhondu stood fifth among the successful pupils and was promoted to the higher standard. He was awarded a scholarship of two rupees a month from which he was able to pay his monthly tuition fees. Everything seemed to shape itself just as he desired and, from now on he could go on with his studies undisturbed, he thought. Hardly had three months passed, however, when illness overtook him. It was a fever which continued to harass him for some weeks and did not leave him till it compelled him to leave Ratnagiri and go back home. He bade good-bye not only to Ratnagiri but, as he felt almost certain at the time, also to his plan of learning English further.

For some time, Dhondu worked as a teacher in the primary school at Murud on five rupees a month. He was fortunate enough to have an opportunity to continue his English studies with the help of Mr. Dhondopant Mandlik. Mr. Mandlik had appeared for the B. A. Examination in Bombay but had failed. He had come back to Murud on account of indifferent health. From him Dhondu obtained some English books and read them in his spare hours.

A few months later, his friends who had come from Bombay for the vacation promised to take him with them to Bombay. The studies which he had completed with Dhondopant's help enabled him to seek admission to the fifth standard in the Robert Money School in Bombay.

4

In Bombay—School And Colleges

BOMBAY was altogether a new place, but Dhondu was able to get used to the new type of living and the new surroundings without much difficulty. The boys from Murud had rented a common-room. Dhondu joined them. For his meals he joined Nagopant Datar's boarding-house. The food was not too bad. After a few weeks he went to stay as a paying guest with Mr. Parshurampant Damle, his old friend from Murud, who had his apartments in Mugbhat in Angre's chawl.

Just opposite their lodging, there was a mansion in which lived a rich man who was evidently a lover of music. Every Saturday night he had a music party in his house. Dhondu lay in his bed awake far into the night listening to the sweet strains of music from the voices of Krishni Jhulpi, a popular dancing-girl and her daughter, Shyami. From Saturday night to Saturday night, the strains lingered in his ears and fondly did he try again and again to reproduce them to himself in his leisure moments. This became a delightful pastime for him, but the thought of going to a music party or even to a *keertan* never entered his mind. With a single-minded devotion he pursued his studies and lived through days and weeks and months with hermit-like rigidity.

At the Robert Money School he won scholarships but not before he had subjected himself to a strenuous, almost painful, effort to improve his hand-writing which, in the beginning, was known to be bad. The improvement was so astonishing

that when a periodical test was held, a few boys in his class who regarded Dhondu as a rival thought of inventing a story. They went to Mr. Jackson, the teacher, and told him that Dhondu had produced an exercise which was actually written for him by his friend, Damle, who was known for his elegant hand. Mr. Jackson was easily led into accepting the story as true and did not deem it necessary to have it verified. He called the culprit—as he thought he was —to the table. Poor Dhondu was already overcome by the false accusation and the malice on which it was founded. Mr. Jackson insisted that the boys must speak to him in English only. Dhondu felt too diffident to express himself in English. He was so overcome with a sense of shame that he could not have spoken even a word of Marathi. He was innocent, and yet he stood before the infuriated teacher who held a cane in his hand. A few seconds, and he died a thousand deaths. He was twenty-one at the time. Was he, at this age, to suffer the humiliation of being caned for an offence which he had not committed? In utter helplessness he raised his hand, but before he could offer it for the punishment, it went up mechanically to his forehead. Mr. Jackson saw this gesture and at once caught its meaning. He lowered the cane.

"Will you write this exercise again?" he asked.

Emboldened by the tenderness in his voice, Dhondu at once replied that he could do it and added that he could write it in the teacher's presence. He was asked to go back to his class-room where he wrote the exercise in the presence of his class-teacher. Though it was not as good as the one he had produced before, the improvement it showed over his former writing was too marked to be doubted. Mr. Jackson was fully satisfied and Dhondu was exonerated.

Maharshi Karve mentions this incident in his reminiscences as an illustration of one of his shortcomings. His own comment on it is that had he been not so nervous and timid, he would have offered to write the exercise to prove his innocence even before Mr. Jackson asked him to do so.

When Dhondu was promoted to the seventh standard, which was the Matriculation class in those days, he met Narhar Balkrishna Joshi whose friendship he valued much for

many reasons and left a permanent impress upon his mind and his whole life. Narharpant had appeared for the Matriculation Examination that year, but due to somebody's carelessness, his answer book in English was lost. He yielded to the fate of repeating for another year only after he had made every possible effort to save it. He not only met Principal Carss of the Robert Money School but also went several times to the Registrar of the University who conducted the Examination. The missing answer-book could not be traced. Narharpant felt much humiliated. He also felt keenly over the loss of a year. When he joined the seventh standard again at the commencement of the new academic year, he found Dhondu among those who were promoted from the sixth standard. He was attracted by Dhondu's natural intelligence and studios habits. Very soon, they became friends and began to study together. Narharpant's resoluteness in every thing and the way in which he easily won the good opinion of others had a profound effect on Dhondu's mind. Without a single pie in his pocket, Narharpant had come to Bombay. A gentleman from his home-town, Deorukh, who was serving in the High Court, allowed him to stay in his house. Narharpant did all sundry jobs for him. He was very intelligent and won scholarships which enabled him to meet his expenses in Bombay.

There was a hostel for Christian students which was situated near the Cowasji Patel Tank. Rev. Jani Ali, a Muslim convert, was its superintendent. Narharpant succeeded in winning Rev. Jani Ali's favour and obtained from him a large room in the hostel premises. He invited Dhondu to join him, and they both used the room as their study. After dinner in the evening they went to the room where they studied together. They slept there. In the morning they spent another hour or two in reading and then went back to their respective lodgings.

There was much in Narharpant which Dhondu admired. He heard his friend discuss religion with Rev. Ali and Principal Carss boldly and learnt much from the arguments put forward by him. Although Narharpant was not able to give his friend some of his boldness and resourcefulness, he found

in Dhondu a willing disciple who, as a result of the long talks they had, gradually shook off many of his old ideas and beliefs. At first, Dhondu was shocked to see Narharpant drinking water touched by Rev. Ali or Principal Carss, but gradually learnt to do it himself.

In less than a year after Dhondu went to Bombay for his education, Kesopant died. It was the rainy season. Dada did not inform Dhondu of their father's illness as travelling was very difficult on account of the rains and he took care to see that his brother's studies were not disturbed. Kesopant's last illness was of a short duration. When news of Kesopant's death came, it was too sad to be true. Overcome with grief and cursing himself for not being able to be at his father's bedside during the last months, Dhondu tried to think of the future which appeared to him to be dark. Deprived so suddenly of his father's care and support, what was he to do and what place would he have to occupy in the family?

Kesopant died on the Nagpanchami day in the month of *Shravan* (August). His son was not able to return to Murud and meet the other bereaved members of the family for about ten weeks. He met them during the Diwali holidays. Dada was already there. They discussed plans for the future. It was all too evident that they had very difficult days ahead, and for a time they did not know what they could do to face the situation. Through all the dark and desperate hours, it was their mother who gave them courage and the strength of mind, not by words but by her own example. During her husband's last illness, she displayed admirable courage. When it became known that Kesopant's end was near, she did not lose heart. She went through all her household duties and did all the nursing of the dying patient herself. Whenever she could snatch a few spare moments, she sat before the family deity and prayed. She prayed that she may have the fortitude to face the worst when it came. It came in about forty-eight hours, and then she kept perfectly calm. It was beyond her to protest against those hideous rites which she was subjected to as a widow, but she went through the painful and humiliating process without so much as a sigh. Dada and Dhondu realised now as they never did before what

a tower of strength their mother was to them. They did what she told them. It was decided that Dada should give up his job at Bankot and take up one at Murud so that he may be able to stay with the family. Dhondu's education in Bombay was to go on undisturbed. It was suggested by some well-wishers that expenses over boarding could be cut down or reduced if Dhondu accepted charitable offers from well-to-do families to feed him on certain days of the week—what is known as the *vaar* system. The suggestion was resolutely brushed aside. More stringent measures of economy were decided upon. It was expected that by adopting these measures Dhondu would be able to reduce his monthly expenses by four rupees. If necessary, a loan could be taken from Mr. Paranjpye, Dhondu's maternal uncle. He gladly promised to give all the help they needed. During the next two years, they received from Mr. Paranjpye a total sum of two hundred rupees as a loan.

Austere as the days were, they were not without their lighter, merrier side. The five or six weeks of summer holidays which Dhondu spent at Murud were full of fun and merriment. Dhondu was fond of dramas, and from his early boyhood he used to participate in staging plays. Kesopant did not at first like the idea of his son's appearing on the stage with a painted face and in different roles. Dhondu was, however, able to convince him that even in places like Poona and in an institution like the Deccan College, students were encouraged to take part in such pastimes. In later days, he usually took the lead in organising such performances. Once he brought two stage curtains from Bombay. Dhondu's talents were available not only to play the role of Ganapati in the prologues in which he spoke in Sanskrit, but even for composing dialogues in Sanskrit. His popularity grew when once he spoke as Radha from behind the curtain. One of the unforgettable parts he acted was that of Ashwatthaman in some of the scenes from the Sanskrit play, *Venisamharam*.

Dada had promised to send four rupees every month, but that was hardly enough. And he could not spare more, for his own monthly income was not more than seven or eight rupees. Dhondu was anxious to relieve his brother of the

burden as far as possible. He was fortunate enough to secure a tuition soon after his arrival in Bombay. For teaching the younger brother of one of his class-mates for an hour every day, he expected at least two rupees at the end of the month. What he actually received was just a rupee. His heart was filled with joy to receive even that amount as it was his first earning since his arrival in Bombay, but he gave up the tuition the next day. One or two others which he soon found were more paying. A gentleman came to him every Sunday and for the help Dhondu gave him to read the verses from the Nav-neet for an hour, he paid him two annas. Thus he was able to add eight annas to his monthly earnings. In the fifth and sixth standards he was awarded the first scholarship, but in the seventh he got the second and for a few months the third. With these additions to what Dada sent, he was able to meet the expenses without any difficulty. Gradually he became more confident about his own capacity and worth. When he passed the Matriculation Examination at the first attempt, he began to feel that he could do many more things and achieve greater success.

Four years before, he had not dreamt that it would be possible for him to pass the Matriculation Examination. In his later life, Professor Karve conceived wonderful and ambitious plans of public service with a vision that was all his own, and carried them through with eminent success. During those early days at school, however, he could hardly see beyond a step. Every day, every hour, he felt nervous about the next step he had to take. He was not without hope. And even in the midst of nervousness and diffidence, there was determination. With a step that did not falter, he went on. His path became smoother on account of the encouragement and help he had from his mother and from his brother.

After Kesopant's death, their mother and Dada took charge of the affairs of the family. Both of them made it easy for Dhondu to go on with his education uninterruptedly. For Maharshi Karve, those are unforgettable days. They were full of trials and difficulties, but they were also filled with tenderness, patience and courage. It was during those days that the foundation of Professor Karve's later career as a

social worker and educationist and of his life's mission were being laid. It was the foundation of sacrifice and mutual help, of affection and devotion.

Among those who contributed to the magnificent task of laying that foundation were his parents, his brother and his sister, Ambatai. From Dada and Ambatai he learnt the great lesson of patience and the still greater lesson of preserving a mind at peace with itself under all circumstances. He cannot think of any other person who showed greater kindness to him than Dada. And whenever he thinks of Ambatai, his heart is full of admiration for the cultured mind and outlook so highly developed in her although she had no education or learning of any kind.

There was still another person whose contribution to the making of his character was no less significant. Dhondo Keshav Karve and Narhar Balkrishna Joshi were inseparable and constant companions for over ten years. They lived together when they were students of the Robert Money School. Afterwards they had a joint establishment. Narharpant created in Dhondu a love for reading. They read together many books. One he remembers more than any other is R. W. Trine's *'In Tune With the Infinite'*. Mr. Joshi later translated this book into Marathi. Whatever he spoke was the product of careful thought and for Dhondu it always gave food for meditation. As Professor Karve has acknowledged in the story of his life, it was Narharpant's influence that considerably widened his outlook on life and gave it a rational turn.

Dr. Mackichan, Principal of the Wilson College, always tried to draw intelligent students to his College. Dhondo Keshav Karve's rank among the successful candidates at the Matriculation Examination was sixteenth. His friend, Narharpant, stood third. Dr. Mackichan succeeded in inducing both Joshi and Karve to join the Wilson College through Rev. Carss, Principal of the Robert Money School and Rev. Jani Ali, and by offering them scholarships.

It was only after the results of the Matriculation Examination were declared that Mr. Karve could confidently look forward to a career at the University. With Narharpant's

help he was able to obtain books from those who had already passed the Previous Examination. The Wilson College in those days was situated on the old Girgaum Back Road. Narharpant obtained rooms on the top floor of Gopinath Khatri's chawl for a monthly rent of Rs. 3-12-0. This building was very near to the College. Narharpant brought his wife to Bombay, and they set up a home. His younger brother, Waman, also stayed with them. Mr. Karve joined them as a paying guest, but he was treated more as a member of the family than as a paying guest. Both Joshi and Karve got scholarships and they earned a good deal by doing private tuitions. Mr. Karve had to repay the loan his uncle, Mr. Paranjpye, had given him. He, therefore, worked very hard. He accepted all the tuitions that were offered to him. How could a college student do tuitions for several hours of the day and still apply his mind sufficiently to his studies? But Mr. Karve scarcely gave serious thought to this problem, for he was bent on repaying the loan at an early date even at the cost, to some extent, of his studies. Thus he was able to release himself from the liability—it was a sum of two hundred rupees—before he completed his college education.

While Karve and Joshi were at the Wilson College, they had heard a good deal about Dr. Wordsworth, Principal of the Elphinstone College, grandson of the poet, who had become the idol of his students. He fascinated them by his teaching of poetry. To learn in an institution of which Dr. Wordsworth was Principal was considered a good fortune and it was a great honour if a student attracted his notice and became known to him. One of Dr. Wordsworth's earlier students, the late Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, described the impression which he carried of Dr. Wordsworth's teaching by narrating the following incident:

"He (Dr. Wordsworth) was one day explaining a passage of poetry and as he came to the lines which speak of—

'The grandeur which invests
The mariner who sails the roaring sea
Through storm and darkness,'

and pointing to the wide expanse of the ocean, bounded by the horizon, visible from the window of his lecture-room in

the College, he spoke with fervour of man's capacity to fight evil, endure difficulties, and develop in himself qualities divine, it seemed as if his grandfather, the poet, shone in his face. As he went on for nearly half an hour decanting on the depth of the meaning there was in the lines, I felt as if a cubit or two was added to my own stature, mental and moral."[1]

Such accounts reached the ears of Mr. Joshi and Mr. Karve while they were in the Wilson College. They and two other students of the College decided to join the Elphinstone College after passing the Previous Examination. It was difficult for them to obtain the transfer certificate from the Wilson College. Luckily for them, Dr. Mackichan had gone to Scotland on furlough. He would never have allowed the two bright students who had obtained a good second class in the Previous Examination to leave his college. Rev. Stothart who was the acting Principal, was very angry, but after a long effort, the four students succeeded in obtaining their leaving certificates. Mr. Karve's leaving certificate which bears the date December 4, 1882, states that he left "for no fault, but of his own free will." Dr. Wordsworth was very kind to them. He not only admitted them, but at once offered them free student-ships. Ordinarily a student was required to be in the College for at least a term and show satisfactory progress before he was considered eligible for the concession. Here, again, it was Narharpant who did everything that was needed to win Dr. Wordsworth's sympathy and favour for all of them.

The Elphinstone College was in those days at Byculla opposite the Victoria Gardens. Karve and Joshi had to travel by the local train. They purchased season tickets from the Grant Road instead of the Charni Road Station, in order to save a little money. During the winter months, they dispensed with the season tickets altogether and walked the whole distance from Girgaum to the College and back.

Mathematics was Mr. Karve's special subject. It was taught in those days by Professor J. Hathornthwaite who was known to be typical of an earlier generation of Oxford, and

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1 Speeches and writings of Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, p. 412.

whose delight it was to refer with zest to the "Cambridge cowards" whom the College walls harboured. Although Mr. Karve was attracted to the Elphinstone College by Principal Wordsworth's fame as a great teacher, he found it difficult to follow his lectures which, he confesses in his autobiography, were beyond the grasp of ordinary students. He had, however, the satisfaction that he was able to join the Elphinstone College and count himself among Principal Wordsworth's students.

Among his fellow-students at the Elphinstone College were Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the great mathematician and leader, Chimanlal Setalwad, the distinguished lawyer and politician, T. K. Gajjar, the founder of the Chemical Industry in Bombay, and Chintaman Gangadhar Bhanu and P. J. Padshah—men who distinguished themselves in public life.

Mr. Karve passed the B. A. Examination of the University of Bombay in 1884 with Mathematics as his special subject. Other and perhaps greater achievements came in later years, but this one is remembered by him with especial satisfaction. While he was learning in the primary school at Murud, his ambition was to pass the Public Examination which was the sixth standard examination. At the Robert Money School, he felt that he would be very fortunate if he was able to pass the Matriculation Examination. Now he was a graduate. He looked back on the years he had spent in the school and in the college with satisfaction not unmingled with pride.

He was twenty-seven at the time. Narharpant decided to study law and would have liked his friend to do likewise. Mr. Karve, however, had already made up his mind. He had a feeling that he would never be able to make a success in the legal profession. He wanted to take the M. A. degree but he was not very keen.

During the whole of their college career, Narharpant Joshi and Dhondo Keshav Karve continued to stay together except during the last six months. Joshi sent his wife home during this period and took a room in the college hostel in order to be able to devote all his attention to his studies before the final examination. Mr. Karve took advantage of this change and brought his wife, Radhabai, and his two-and-a-half

year old son, Raghunath, to Bombay. Thus it was more than ten years after his marriage that he had what he could call his own home for the first time. As he says in his autobiography, this was the third and final stage in his life as a married man. The first stage began with his marriage which took place when he was fifteen and his bride a girl of nine. It was, what he calls, married life only in name. During the next stage, they were able to live as man and wife only during the vacations which Mr. Karve spent at Murud. During this period Raghunath was born. Before Raghunath's birth, however, Mr. Karve utilised his stay at Murud in teaching his young wife and Ambatai, his sister. The idea of educating girls was entirely foreign in those days to the people of Murud, but Mr. Karve's parents who had a broad mind and outlook gave him all encouragement in his first effort to give education to women. The two girls made considerable progress. When Mr. Karve returned to Bombay, Dada continued the work of teaching them. Raghunath's birth in 1883 interrupted it for some time. When Radhabai came to Bombay, her husband collected the threads where they were left two and a half years before. In a few months, she was able to read any Marathi book without difficulty and even completed the first two books of English. This she was able to achieve during the short time which Mr. Karve could spare for her in the midst of his heavy work.

5

Teacher

IT is difficult to draw a distinguishing line between Dhondo Keshav Karve as a student and as a teacher. Even before joining the Wilson College, he had achieved a fair amount of success as a private tutor. It was a difficult job but before he was aware of it, he had begun to like it. After his graduation he decided to stick to the teaching profession. By now, he had before his eyes a fairly clear idea of his purpose in life. His immediate object was to seek a full-time job so that he could contribute to the maintenance of the family at Murud and relieve Dada, at least partially, of the burden he had borne alone since their father's death. But there was a higher purpose. He chose a career in which it was giving that mattered most. There was nothing more precious than knowledge that a man can give. And so he chose teaching not merely as a vocation, but as his mission in life.

Mr. Vaman Abaji Modak was the Principal of the Elphinstone High School at the time. He knew Mr. Karve since the time he had stayed in his house at Ratnagiri as a student. Mr. Modak had also seen him once or twice in Bombay. There were two vacancies in the School, one of them, permanent and the other temporary. Narharpant, with his natural gift of making a favourable impression on everybody, was taken up in the permanent post. Mr. Karve went to Mr. Modak to request him to appoint him in the other—the temporary post.

"Do you think you can teach a class of forty boys?"

Mr. Modak asked.

Mr. Karve felt very nervous. He summoned up whatever boldness he could and answered,

"I think I can, Sir. I'll at least try."

"It isn't an easy job, my boy," said Mr. Modak, "You look too young to be a teacher."

"But, sir—" Mr. Karve could not speak further.

"I'm sorry I can't take you up."

Mr. Karve was sorely down-hearted. But he did not lose hope. Mr. Hathornthwaite who was his professor at the Elphinstone College knew him very well. So he went to him and told him about the conversation between Mr. Modak and himself. The kind-hearted professor consoled him and promised to do what he could. In a few days, a call came from Mr. Modak. Mr. Karve saw him and was told that he was appointed.

His first day's performance in the school as a teacher was not disappointing. He was asked to go to the fourth standard in which there were forty boys. The young apprentice had the satisfaction that he could manage the class well.

Professor Hathornthwaite also introduced his student to some officers in the Army for whom a knowledge of mathematics was essential. Mr. Karve taught them mathematics and earned a decent monthly income from these private tuitions. For three turns a week, each of the officers paid him twenty or twenty-five rupees per month.

When he completed a year at the Elphinstone High School, Mr. Modak who had now changed his opinion about him offered to appoint him permanently. Mr. Karve thankfully declined the offer. He had decided not to take a permanent job in Government service. Two or three paying tuitions would be quite enough, he thought. He was not particularly anxious to do any other job, as he intended to read for the M. A. and offer Physics and Chemistry for the examination. In 1887, three years after he had taken the first degree, he appeared for the M. A. examination, but was not successful. He then gave up the idea for good.

His old professor introduced him to a few more jobs—these were part-time jobs in two schools—the Cathedral Girls'

High School and the Alexandra Girls' High School. In each of these he taught the Matriculation class mathematics and a little science. He worked for an hour and a quarter every day at the Cathedral Girls' School and for two hours a day at the Alexandra Girls' School.

In these two Schools the girls were mostly from European or Parsi families. Mr. Karve's dress was that of a Hindu—a dhoti, a coat of the 'Parsi' style buttoned upto the neck, a turban, shoes and socks. The Principal of one of the schools one day threw a polite hint that he would be better advised to wear trousers instead of a dhoti. The poor teacher who had never put on trousers in his life did not know what to do. He spent long hours for three or four days in brooding over the problem. At last he thought of borrowing a pair of trousers from a friend. He sent his cousin, Raghunath Paranjpye, who was staying with him, to Mr. P. S. Laud whom Mr. Karve knew well. Mr. Laud readily gave him his trousers. After wearing the borrowed garment for three or four days, Mr. Karve found that, after all, it was not so uncomfortable as he feared it was, and then he had a pair or two stitched for himself. For a number of years he continued to wear this mode of dress—trousers and a long coat, with a turban to complete the picture.

One of his teachers at the Robert Money School, Rajaramshastri Bhagwat, founded the Maratha High School in Bombay. Karve was one of Mr. Bhagwat's favourite pupils. As he had continued to take kindly interest in his pupil even after he had left the school, Rajaramshastri asked him to join the High School. Mr. Karve joined it as a teacher and offered to work for a small payment. Rajaramshastri was very glad to have him and looked forward to the day when Mr. Karve would join him as a life-member of the institution. Mr. Karve knew something about the New English School which a small group of young and selfless workers including Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar had founded in Poona a few years before. He looked upon Mr. Bhagwat's school as a similar venture and hoped that, one day, when he was free from the worries about his family at Murud, he would be able to dedicate his life to the cause of

education by joining the Maratha High School as a life-worker. He worked with selfless zeal.

The work he did in the schools and his private tuitions kept him busy for not less than eight hours every day. He had also to spend considerable time in going from one place to another. He chose to walk the distance as a measure of economy. It was hard, strenuous work that he was doing but he enjoyed doing it. It also gave him a good monthly income which enabled him to lay by a little after doing all that was needed to help his mother and Dada.

He began his day's time-table with his private coaching class for the European and Anglo-Indian boys of St. Peter's School at Mazagaon at six in the morning. During winter months, it was necessary for the class to have a lamp lighted at least for the first half or three quarters of an hour. From Girgaum where he lived, he walked to St. Peter's School, and it took him nearly an hour to do so. Radhabai woke him up at 4-30. She had his breakfast ready for him at 5. It consisted of rice mixed with curds. As he walked every morning from Girgaum to Mazagaon, he felt fresh and strong and looked forward to another day of useful and hard work. Without knowing it, the young teacher who did not nurse any high ambitions about himself was walking the same unknown path in the early hours of the dawn from darkness to light, which was chosen by Agarkar and Tilak in Poona, in the same sphere but perhaps in a humbler way. As he taught the boys of St. Peter's and of Maratha High School and the girls of the other two schools, he felt the satisfaction of having done something which not only gave him and his family their subsistence, but also contributed to the intellectual progress of the boys and girls whose buoyant, eager, smiling faces drove away all the fatigue of his body and mind.

Even after working from six in the morning till late in the evening with two or three very brief intervals for a hurried lunch at home or for a cup of tea at the Irani's restaurant, Mr. Karve still found time to look after his wife's progress in studies.

Narharpant Joshi and D. K. Karve continued to have a common lodging and establishment even after their graduation

and after each had found full-time jobs. A third friend, Moreshwar Ramchandra Kale, the well-known author of the two books on Sanskrit Grammar joined them. The whole household consisted of Narharpant, his wife and his younger brother; Mr. Karve, Radhabai, little Raghunath and Radhabai's sister, and Mr. Kale's family. These three families lived happily together for seven years. A distribution of work was made by common agreement among the women as well as the men. While Narharpant or his brother did the shopping, the accounts were left to Mr. Karve who kept them with great care and precision. For the peace and harmony of the joint household, Mr. Karve gave almost entire credit to the ladies who, as he says in his autobiography, displayed considerable forbearance and tact in tiding over differences and disputes, small and sometimes big, which were bound to arise and did arise. He looks back on those days with pleasure and pride because it was lauded by Narharpant's parents and by his own mother and sister who visited them. For a few months, Narharpant's younger sister, Godubai, who was a child widow, stayed in the joint establishment before she joined the Sharada-Sadan founded by Pandita Ramabai.

In Mr. Karve's life and daily time-table there was little room for pleasures, but he loved the happy life of contentment he had during those seven years. It was Radhabai, his wife, who gave him that happiness in the midst of hard work. As an ideal Hindu wife, she kept to herself and made a deliberate effort to forget all the inconveniences and heartburnings that inevitably arose in the joint establishment and never bothered her husband with them. Mr. Karve could see how patiently and even gladly she bore the burden of the household. She had to look after the daily needs not only of her husband and her son. There were four boarders.

True to his zeal for the spread of education, Mr. Karve had brought to Bombay four boys from his home town. One of them was Raghunath, son of his maternal uncle, Purushottampant Paranjpye. Mr. Karve made it a point to visit his uncle at Murdi whenever he went home for the vacations. During one of his visits, he saw Raghunath writing something on the slate.

"Do you want to learn English, Raghunath?" he asked the boy.

"To be sure, Anna," the boy eagerly replied.

There was something in the young voice which struck Mr. Karve. He at once knew that Raghunath had in him the making of a scholar. In fact, Raghunath had the example of his cousin, Dhondu, held before his eyes by his mother. Among the earliest recollections of Dr. Raghunath P. Paranjpye are the words spoken by his mother, "Be learned like Dhondu." She used to tell him every now and then how wise and learned Dhondu was. These words continued to ring in Raghunath's ears. The boy was only waiting for an opportunity to try and "be like" Anna as all younger members of the family called Mr. Karve and as he is still called and known in intimate circles.

Mr. Karve took the boy's slate and wrote the first four letters of the English alphabet on it.

"Take this and learn these letters well," he told Raghunath. After his afternoon nap he examined the slate and was glad to see that the letters were neatly written.

"Will you go with me?" Mr. Karve asked the boy.

Raghunath answered by putting on his shirt and cap. In a few minutes, his kit was ready. Mr. Karve had already obtained his uncle's permission to take the boy with him. Raghunath was nine years old at the time.

For a few years, Mr. Karve arranged to have Raghunath admitted to the Mission School at Dapoli. Wamanrao, Narharpant's brother, was a teacher in that school. Raghunath stayed with him. When he completed the first three standards, Mr. Karve took him to Bombay.

There were three other boarders in the house. While Raghunath Paranjpye took full advantage of the opportunity he had to learn, the others did not show much progress in their studies. Paranjpye soon distinguished himself by his brilliant scholarship. He appeared for the Matriculation Examination in 1891 and stood first among the successful candidates.

The boys who stayed with Mr. Karve went to the Maratha High School. Looking back on those days, Dr. R. P. Par-

anjpye says in his introduction to Dr. D. K. Karve's autobiography:

> "Many great men appear great only from a distance, but they do not appear so to those who have intimate contacts with them. I cannot say that about Anna. He belongs to that rare type of men who inspire even greater respect and affection as intimacy with them grows and continues. Garrick, the noted actor of the English stage, was among the young men who went to Dr. Johnson for learning. These young students paid greater attention to their teacher's queer ways of behaviour and eccentricities than to his learning and other great qualities. They made fun of him behind his back. We, four or five of us, who lived with Professor Karve in Bombay were much like Dr. Johnson's students. Hardly any one of our other teachers escaped our jeers. We often laughed at them, amongst ourselves of course. But we considered it to be an unpardonable sin even to talk about Anna in a light-hearted and frivolous manner. To give him a little offence or to cause him the slightest pain was something we could not even think of, for even a frown or an angry word from him was to us the severest penalty. The capacity so to inspire the younger generation as to command only their love and respect is, I believe, one of the rarest virtues that have made Anna great. Even we, in those early days, knew that he had in him the qualities of a great man. In later years when his fame spread throughout the country, we, his early students, felt proud and, of course, delighted, but we were not surprised."

Mr. Karve's way of making financial provision for his wards was unique. He could never forget the yearning he had for learning and the difficulties he encountered as a student. One of his first thoughts, therefore, was for poor and deserving students. He would give them encouragement and help, but he was anxious to teach them self-reliance and to spare them the humiliation which they might feel at having to receive help only as charity. To some of them including even his own cousin, Raghunath Paranjpye, he advanced the amount they needed for their higher education as a loan. He

maintained a detailed account of the original sum and the interest on it at the rate of $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent as if it was the account in a Postal Savings Bank. He also had a Life Insurance Policy for a thousand rupees in the name of Raghunath Paranjpye as he did in the case of the others. When Mr. Paranjpye paid off the loan, the Policy was returned to him. Even after the loan was repaid, the grateful ward and student assigned the policy in favour of Mr .Karve's institution, the Anath-Balikashram at Hingne. There is a touch of regret in Mr. Karve's confession that if he had not chosen the life of poverty as he did, it would have been possible for him to help many more students in their educational efforts.

Raghunath, Mr. Karve's son, was younger in age than the boarders. His early education was completed at home under his mother's supervision. For a year or so, they had a tutor for him. When the boy was eight years old, they thought of sending him to a regular school, but they felt that it would be difficult for him to sit in a regular class in a Bombay school with the somewhat inadequate training he had received at home. They, therefore, entrusted him to the care of Mr. Balkrishna Waman Achval, Mr. Karve's old friend. He was a teacher at Burondi, about six miles from Murud. Both Mr. Karve and Radhabai had full confidence in Mr. Achval whose house was next to that of Radhabai's father and Mrs. Achval was an intimate friend of hers. Mr. Achval had a son who was of the same age as Raghunath. They brought him back to Bombay when he completed the fifth standard.

In most things Mr. Karve tried not to go against the wishes of his relatives and even friends. He could not bear the idea of giving the slightest pain to anyone. But there were occasions when he did not yield even to his mother or elder brother. One such occasion was the *upanayan* of Raghunath. Mr. Karve felt that it was a simple ceremony and therefore he did not want to spend anything more on it than was absolutely necessary. His mother, Dada and Radhabai would have liked to give presents to relatives and friends. Their financial circumstances were at the time quite favourable and, they thought, they could easily spend a little lavishly. Mr. Karve's views were different. If monev was available

for spending, he would rather give it to a worthy cause than just spend it on items like giving feasts or presents. He explained his point of view to the others but it was not appreciated or adequately understood. His mother tried to remonstrate with him.

"Is it not the duty of a householder to perform the *upanayan* of his eldest son in a manner worthy of the prestige of the family?" she asked.

"Yes, it is, but that does not mean that money should be wasted." Mr. Karve said, "I am prepared to spend on essentials."

"Do you call items such as giving presents to relatives and friends as non-essential? Everybody does it."

"Yes, mother," Mr. Karve replied entreatingly, "but why should we do things only because others do them? Don't you think it is far better to set a high example than to follow an ordinary one?"

"You are learned and wise, my son," his mother said. She spoke slowly and sadly. "How can an ignorant, old woman like me argue with you? I have my ideas and beliefs to which I have stuck all my life . . . "

"And I want you to stick to them" Mr. Karve said with fondness, "and I shall give you all the help I can in the performance of the duties and rites you hold sacred. Say the word, mother, and I'll see that your wish is carried out. But, pray, you should leave me free to pursue the path which I see as the right one."

It was not difficult for Mr. Karve to satisfy his mother who was a woman of understanding and had a generous heart. Had she not allowed her son to teach his young wife before she went to Bombay and thus gone against the custom of those days? She knew Dhondu would not do anything that was wrong according to his own convictions. She accepted his plea, and he gladly gave her all the money she needed to perform her religious vows and rites after her own heart.

The *upanayan* was performed in a very simple manner in Bombay. Mr. Achval also had his own son's *upanayan* performed along with that of Raghunath in the same way. They managed everything in fifteen rupees, and thus were

able to save three hundred rupees which the ceremonies would have cost if they were performed in the traditional manner. This amount the two friends handed over to the Murud Fund which was started a few years before by Mr. Karve and a few others. They laid down the condition that the interest may be spent on the education of girls or for the spread of English education.

Dada followed Dhondu's advice and example in deciding to have the marriage of his daughter, Manutai, performed without spending much. His brother helped him to find a bridegroom who belonged to a poor family but was intelligent. Mr. Karve took the boy later with him to Bombay and he stayed with his other wards in his own house. Later, when Mr. Karve joined the Fergusson College in Poona, the boy joined the New English School and passed the Matriculation Examination in due course. For him also Mr. Karve had a Life Insurance Policy. Unfortunately he died before he could even complete his education. From the amount of his insurance money, Mr. Karve gave his poor old father what he needed to pay off his debts, and the balance was given to the Murud Fund.

Raghunath Paranjpye and the other boys were very happy under the motherly care of Radhabai. While she looked after their food and physical comforts, Mr. Karve took care of their progress in studies. Radhabai's task was by far the more difficult. She had to get up early in order to have her husband's breakfast ready for he left home before sunrise. Then she had to cook the food for the boys. Sometimes she had to prepare the meals for the whole household. She worked tirelessly and worked without grumbling. The boys looked upon her as their own mother. Whenever anyone of them returned home tired after a day's hard work, she greeted him with a smile and with words of affection, and thus made him forget his worries and fatigue. Mr. Karve's conscience pricked him often for his inability to give his dutiful, uncomplaining wife the rest she badly needed and he feared that her health might break under the weight of the household duties. His worst fears came true. The strain proved too great for the poor housewife. Her health broke. Sometimes she found it impos-

sible to leave her bed. Then the boys did the cooking with their Anna by their side to give them instructions. It was no longer safe for Radhabai to stay on in Bombay. With a heavy heart Mr. Karve sent his ailing wife back to Murud.

After a stay of several weeks at Murud, Radhabai longed to return to Bombay. She came but once again her health broke down. Again she went back to Murud—this time never to return. Mr. Karve knew and she knew it too that the hand of death was upon her. The body was perishing but the mind and the heart struggled to live. Mr. Karve wrote to her consoling letters and tried to prepare her for the inevitable. Her letters to him were full of love. The hearts continued to remain knit together.

It was Nagpanchami, fifth of the month of *Shravan.* It was on this day, twelve years before, that Kesopant, Mr. Karve's father, died. This Nagpanchami proved to be the last day in his wife's life.

The sky was overcast with dark clouds. There was darkness also in the heart of the poor teacher who walked from one school to another and did all his work with his usual calmness. But he moved and worked like a machine.

Three days later. It was evening. Mr. Karve returned home at the usual hour. A letter was waiting for him. He took it up and opened it. It had brought him the news of Radhabai's death. The rush of grief within did not show itself on the face which remained calm. At night there was no sleep, but in the morning he got up at the usual hour. The next day found him in no way different. The whole routine was gone through as usual as if nothing had happened.

Radhabai's husband perpetuated her memory with a donation of five hundred rupees to the Murud Fund for a scholarship to be named after her.

6

The Beginning

FROM its remote beginning, Maharshi Karve's life has been one of giving and very little of receiving. The Murud Fund was just one of the tangible results of his passion to do some good somewhere for someone always. While he was studying at the Elphinstone College, he had begun to earn by doing private tuitions. For every rupee he earned, he set aside a pice for charity. On the day he began his work as a teacher at the Elphinstone High School, he started what he himself named 'The Maratha Five Per Cent Fund'. Five per cent of his earnings were credited to this Fund. His teacher, Rajaramshastri Bhagwat, had a great fascination for the name 'Maratha' which he gave to the school he founded. Mr. Karve liked the name because his teacher liked it. The amount collected in the Fund was spent judiciously for some good cause. Preference was given to the cause of education. Mr. Karve carefully kept an account of the amounts credited and spent.

Nagopant Datar, an old friend from Murud, had started business in Bombay long before Mr. Karve went there for his education. He ran a boarding house and Mr. Karve had his meals in this boarding house. Nagopant fell ill. He was suffering from a disease of the lungs. When the illness became worse, he closed down the boarding house and went back to Murud with his wife and mother. While in Bombay, Mr. Datar had borrowed five rupees from Mr. Karve and he had not been able to repay the loan. During his visit to Murud for

the vacation, Mr. Karve was grieved to hear about the rapidly deteriorating condition of Nagopant's health. He went to see him. Nagopant's face fell when he saw his old customer. He had not been able to repay the loan he had taken from him.

"Have you come to demand the repayment of the loan I took from you?" Nagopant spoke in a low tone. "I'm so sorry, my health made it impossible . . . "

"Don't worry, Nagopant," said Mr. Karve comforting the dying man. "I haven't come for that purpose. I have come to enquire about your health and to tell you that you need not worry about the loan. Please regard the amount as already paid."

Nagopant could hardly find words to express his thoughts. He made a desparate effort but Mr. Karve stopped him.

"May be this'll be of some little help to you in your present need." So saying he took out three rupees from his pocket and gave them to the poor man. Tears of gratitude rolled down Nagopant's eyes. He could not speak.

The three rupees Mr. Karve gave Nagopant were the first accumulated amount from the collection he made by setting aside a pice for every earned rupee. The act gave him a feeling of satisfaction which an income of three thousand rupees could not have given him.

The Karves of Murud took special pride in the temple of Durgadevi and the spacious tank. In their days of plenty and prosperity, their forefathers had taken the initiative in building the temple and having the tank constructed. Both were the pride of Murud. Dhondo Keshav Karve regarded the maintenance of these two old institutions as a legacy handed down by his forefathers. His family had long ceased to be prosperous and his own earnings were just sufficient for his own needs and those of his family. Still in 1889 he took the initiative in making efforts to have the temple repaired. The tank, however, was found to be beyond repairs.

About the same time, his friends, Parashram Hari Damle and Kashinathpant Kane, joined him in starting the Murud Fund. On the Vijaya-dashami Day, in 1888, the Murud Fund was formally inaugurated. The sincerity and zeal of the three collaborators gave it stability as a result of which good work

is still being done. It was started when Maharshi Karve was thirty. At ninety-nine, he can have the satisfaction that the grateful residents of his town have still maintained the Fund as an active and useful institution.

The Marathi School and the Middle School at Murud owe their present position of stability to the early efforts of a group of friends headed by Dhondo Keshav Karve. In 1889, he and three or four of his friends made a house-to-house collection to give the School a building of its own.

It was with a different object that the residents of the Dapoli taluka, under Mr. Karve's leadership, founded the Sneha-vardhak Mandali. The object was to give its members a composite social life. The headquarters of the Mandali were in the taluka town, Dapoli. It was Mr. Karve's anxious desire to have the membership thrown open to non-brahmins. At its very first meeting, he made a fervent appeal in which he quoted instances to show how the people of the taluka, their own forefathers, had given the non-brahmins a place of honour in their festivals and generally in the administration of all public affairs. His appeal proved to be a cry in the wilderness. Barring this unfortunate feature, the first meeting was a great success. It led to a series of similar meetings and functions which were held once every year in other towns till 1893. In that year, Mr. Karve was compelled to sever his connection with the Sneha-vardhak Mandali as it became clear to him that on account of his second marriage with a widow which took place in that year his presence would be unwelcome to many of its members. The Mandali itself came to a premature end within a year of Mr. Karve's severance of his connection with it.

In 1891, his household consisted of eight persons. Narmadabai, his wife's elder sister who was a widow, had come to stay with them to assist Radhabai in the household work during the days of her failing health. She continued to stay after Radhabai's death and was of great help to her brother-in-law. There were two girls—Mr. Karve's niece and his nephew's wife, whose husbands were among the five boarders. In the midst of this little crowd, Mr. Karve felt lonely, but he did not desire a change. He was fully engrossed with his

work—the tuitions and the part-time jobs, and more than these, the work in the Maratha High School. Now he thought he was in a position to finalise his plans for the future. It was his desire to devote all his time and energies to the development of the Maratha High School and, for this purpose, to join Rajaramshastri as a life-worker. As soon as he was free from the responsibility of maintaining the family establishment at Murud, he hoped to be able to give up all the other jobs. In 1888, Dada and he had entered into an agreement according to which he was to pay for the Murud establishment a sum of fifteen hundred rupees in all during a fixed period. Till the amount was paid, he agreed to pay to Dada an interest on it at the rate of six per cent. Besides, he undertook to pay two hundred rupees to Ambatai in accordance with their father's last wish. He also offered to give a hundred rûpees to Manutai, Dada's daughter. The total amount came up to rupees eighteen hundred, exclusive of the interest. When he could pay this amount he could consider himself relieved of his obligations to the family and to Dada, and would be free to devote all his energies and his savings to some useful public cause.

For a few weeks after Radhabai's death, Mr. Karve went on with his work as if nothing had happened, but in his heart there was gloom. He gave constant thought to the sad conditions of Hindu women. He looked upon all women as his sisters and had for them the same reverence as he had for his mother. At times, however, he thought of his own future. He felt that he was now free to choose his vocation. As the Maratha High School engaged his thoughts and aspirations, he nearly decided to devote the rest of his life to the service of that institution. These thoughts and plans were suddenly interrupted by a letter. It came from an old friend who was with him at the Elphinstone College, Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Mr. Gokhale was a professor at the Fergusson College in Poona. This College was started by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and a few others in 1885. The same band of young men had founded the New English School some years before with the object of rendering selfless service to the cause of education. They had also founded the Deccan

Education Society. Those who wished to give their lifelong service to either of the institutions, were admitted as life-members of the Deccan Education Society which conducted them.

In 1891, Professor Bal Gangadhar Tilak left the Fergusson College and the Deccan Education Society as a result of differences with his colleagues, foremost among whom was Mr. Agarkar. As a result of Mr. Tilak's resignation, Mr. Gokhale whose subject was mathematics had to teach English. As this subject made greater demands on his time and energies it became necessary for the Society to look for a man who could relieve Professor Gokhale of mathematics. He thought of Dhondo Keshav Karve who was with him at the Elphinstone College and had made a mark as a good student of Mathematics.

Professor Gokhale's letter was an invitation to Mr. Karve to join the Fergusson College.

It was a great honour and a rare piece of good fortune to be invited to join an institution like the Fergusson College. So Mr. Karve thought. But he was diffident. He was only a B.A. How could he, he wondered, teach students of the B.A. Class? He felt that it was beyond him to control big classes in the college. He decided to thank his friend for his offer and regretfully decline it. When he told Rajaramshastri, his old teacher, about the decision, the kindly old man laughed at his empty fears.

"Don't be a fool, Karve," said Rajaramshastri, "if you don't accept the offer, you'll regret your own folly all your life."

"It's enough for me to have an opportunity to serve the cause of education, Sir," politely Mr. Karve told his teacher, "why should I think of leaving the Maratha High School?"

"Precisely because the Fergusson College needs you and there you will have greater opportunities to do what lies nearest your heart."

Mr. Karve accepted Rajaramshastri's advice in all humility. The good old Shastri was sorry to lose the services of an intelligent and earnest young man, but he would not think only of his institution, and he knew that Mr. Karve's talents

were better suited for a college.

At the first interview, it was agreed that Mr. Karve should serve the Deccan Education Society for a period of two years as a probationer. Two months after the interview, on November 15, 1891, he joined the Fergusson College as Professor of Mathematics.

The four boarders, the two girls, and Raghunath, his son, went to Poona with him. Narmadabai who also accompanied them looked after the household and was assisted in her household duties by the boys. Mr. Karve, therefore, could devote all his energies to the new task, and he worked hard to prove his worth in the new post. A friend of his, Vishnupant Gokhale, who was Principal of the Native Institution, was reading for his M. A. with mathematics as his subject. Professor Karve joined him in his studies, and thus had a good opportunity to add to his knowledge of the subject. Before the period of probation of two years was over, he was admitted as a life-member of the Deccan Education Society. His connection with the Society as an active worker continued till 1914, the year in which he retired with a pension after serving the Society for twenty-three years.

The teacher from Bombay who became a professor in Poona found no difficulty in adjusting himself to the new environment. He had the experience of teaching mathematics to college students of the Previous and Intermediate classes, as some of them came to him for private coaching. Until his cousin, Professor R. P. Paranjpye, joined the Fergusson College on his return from England as a Senior Wrangler, he was the only professor who taught mathematics. When Professor Paranjpye came, he was free to do some teaching in the New English School. For some years, he worked only in the New English School. In 1912 he completed twenty years of service, and was free to retire, but the Society retained his services for two more years.

Mr. Karve came to Poona as a widower. From the beginning he had ruled wealth and pleasures out of his life. Affection for the family and his sense of duty moved him, but there was no attachment. At thirty-three, the young professor had already become old in experience and in wisdom;

but the shoulders continued to be young enough to bear any burden of public service. Dominated by his passion to do good, he worked ceaselessly and in work itself he found his reward.

7

Reformer

THE cause of the remarriage of widows was taken up in Maharashtra by Vishnu Shastri Pandit in the early sixties of the last century. He is known as 'Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar' of Maharashtra. The work which Pandit Vidyasagar started in Bengal—the work of educating public opinion in favour of the remarriage of widows—was taken up in Maharashtra with great zeal by a band of workers among whom Vishnu Shastri Pandit was prominent. The Widow Remarriage Act was passed in 1856 on July 25. This measure was expected to give encouragement to those widows who wished to marry again and begin their lives anew. Although the law came forward to support their cause, general opinion in society, in Maharashtra as in other parts of the country, was opposed to this reform. Men like Vishnu Shastri, however, believed that the true reformation of societies as of individuals is, as Dr. Martineau has pointed out, "from the centre to the circumference; from a solitary point deep buried and unnoticed, first to the circumjacent region, and then over the whole surface; from the native force and inspired insight of some individual mind that kindles, first itself, and then by its irresistible intensity, a wider and wider sphere of souls; spirit being born of spirit, life of life, thought of thought."

This task of first 'kindling itself' belonged to a man of irresistible zeal for reform. He was Gopal Hari Deshmukh, popularly known as 'Lokahitawadi'. Lokahitawadi came to

Bombay in 1862. Shortly after his arrival, he started the Anglo-Marathi paper, Indu Prakash. Vishnu Shastri Pandit wrote on the Marathi side and Mahadev Govind Ranade, another leader who ardently advocated the cause of social reform, wrote articles in English. There was no item they advocated more forcefully than the remarriage of widows. Day after day, Vishnu Shastri wrote with the very blood of his veins. In one of his articles, he pointed out the evil effects of enforced widowhood in the following words:

"It is only the relatives—the fathers, or fathers-in-law or brothers—of the child-widow who can have an adequate idea of the agony of enforced widowhood. It is not easy for every child-widow to guard herself against temptation. Those poor creatures who thus become victims of the evil intentions of men are simply driven to commit such crimes as infanticide. Then living becomes impossible for them for they are looked upon as a blot on the fair name of the family. If, on the other hand, society gives encouragement to those who wish to marry again, it will be an effective check on such immoral acts and crimes."

In the same year in which the Indu Prakash was started, the first widow remarriage took place in Bombay. It was known to a very few persons as it was kept a guarded secret. For seven years, Vishnu Shastri fought bravely and incessantly. In 1865, he founded the "Vidhava-Vivahottejak Mandal" (Society for the Encouragement of Widow Remarriage). It had the good fortune of having as its president the Raja of Jamkhindi and another gentleman of high social standing, Sardar Madhavrao Vinchurkar, became its vice-president. The moving spirit of the Mandal was, of course, Vishnu Shastri himself. Mr. Ranade enlisted himself as one of its active supporters. The shastris and pandits who championed the cause of orthodoxy, took up the challenge by starting the rival organization 'Hindu Dharma Vyavasthapak Sabha' (Society for the Protection of the Hindu Dharma). The Sabha had no difficulty in enlisting the support of the bulk of the Hindu society. Those who belonged to Vishnu Shastri's camp were few but they were earnest souls. They effectively met the attacks of the Sabha and carried on their work undauntedly.

The first tangible fruit of their efforts was seen in an announcement which appeared in the Indu Prakash in which a widow declared her intention of marrying again. The announcement had a quick and favourable response. The supporters of the Sabha could no longer contain their feelings of alarm and indignation. They ran to the Shankaracharya for his protection and aid. They also organised a mighty campaign which culminated in a debate which was to decide whether or not the remarriage of widows was sanctioned by ancient scriptures. The meeting at which the debate was held ended in confusion and chaos. Nor was this all. The advocates of reform received continued threats that the Indu Prakash press would be burnt and the *mandap* in which the marriage of the widow was to take place would be destroyed. The leaders themselves received threats of murder. Fortunately for Vishnu Shastri and his friends, the owner of a gymnasium, himself a man of great physical strength, silenced those who gave these threats by giving counter threats. The promoters went on with the arrangements and the marriage took place on June 15, 1869 in Bombay in the midst of great enthusiasm and display. The spacious hall in the house of Moroba Kanhoba was beautifully decorated for the purpose. Hundreds of guests from all communities were present. The bride and the bridegroom were the recipients of the good wishes of a large number of friends and well-wishers many of whom gave rich presents. As the earlier widow marriage which had taken place seven years before was given no publicity, this remarriage is looked upon as the first widow marriage in Maharashtra.

The Indu Prakash carried glowing accounts of the grand event to the remote towns and villages of Maharashtra. In one of the villages, a lad of eleven read them with great interest. He heard and sometimes participated in the animated discussions that took place. The people of Murud took special interest in the event, because the bride, Venubai, originally belonged to Murud. Frequent discussions on the general question of the remarriage of widows also took place, and Dhondu listened to them with rapt attention.

What he heard and read on the subject of the remarriage

of widows had a profound effect on his mind. Even in those early years, he learnt to regard it as a good and righteous act. His teacher, Mr. Soman, was a man of liberal views. He and his friend, Mr. Bal, read the Indu Prakash and discussed the views expressed in its columns, and particularly those contained in Vishnu Shastri's writings with which they found themselves in agreement. As he heard them talk, Dhondu learnt much about the reform movements. He pondered over what he heard and it largely contributed to the moulding of his own views. As he pondered, he began to look upon the question of the remarriage of widows as one of paramount importance. If there was a noble act a man could perform, it was this—help the cause of the remarriage of widows—he felt.

In 1883, a poem appeared in the Marathi bi-weekly, Kesari, in which the poet made a stirring appeal to society to show kindness and give justice to the girls of ten, eight or even six, who were being married to old men of fifty or sixty; to the child widow whose lot was lifelong misery and servitude; to the women who were thier mothers, sisters and daughters but whom social custom regarded as dumb animals confined to the kitchen and to the cradle. The poem ended with these sentiments:

> "Stop this persecution; show your helpless sisters mercy and kindness. Shake off, O brothers, harsh feelings from your hearts. Like brothers, lead your sisters to a new life through remarriage."

Mr. Karve was a college student in Bombay at the time. He read and re-read the poem. He sang it to himself and sang it loudly. Narharpant heard him singing with rapt attention. Whenever friends called, he was asked to recite the poem. The words and the moving appeal contained in the poem made a profound effect on those who heard it as they were recited by Mr. Karve. He forgot himself and his surroundings as he sang the verses. The deep feeling with which he sang lent greater poignancy to what the poet wished to convey.

His friend of early boyhood, Rambhau Joshi, displayed uncommon courage when, against the wishes of his parents,

he took his widowed sister to Jubbulpore for her marriage with a suitable young man. This example of his friend continued to shine before Mr. Karve's eyes and gave him immense enthusiasm. In later years, it gave him the strength and determination to do the right thing. Radhabai's early death, cruel as it was, made him ponder long over what he read in the Indu Prakash in those years of immaturity at Murud.

Narharpant's three sisters were married at an early age, and all three of them became widows before they reached the prime of life. The eldest of them, Akka, (her name after her marriage was Ambikabai Bhave) did not reach it. She never recovered from the effects of the tortures to which widowhood subjected her. Narharpant and his younger brother fought hard to save her from the painful, disfiguring process to which she decided to submit herself. She could not have willingly prepared herself to have her head shaven and to wear the hated garment of red colour ever after. It would have been possible for her brothers to hold her back. But there was an elderly aunt, herself a widow, who not only warned and admonished her niece but also held her own example before her eyes. After the process, Akka was altogether a different being. She renounced all that could be even remotedly pleasant in life and hardly came out of her small room which was no better than a dungeon, which even the rays of the sun could not enter.

As Narharpant and Mr. Karve lived like brothers, there was a close bond of relationship between him and Narharpant's family. He regarded Akka as his own elder sister. His heart bled to see her horrible plight. He wanted to induce her to change her attitude towards life and her surroundings. He tried but did not succeed. There was one thing which perhaps he could do to satisfy the only longing which was left in her grief-stricken heart. If he did it, she would die in peace. Yes, it was all too evident that her end was fast approaching, and there was only one anxious thought that stood between her suffering soul and its liberation. That anxious thought was about her only daughter, Balee. She requested Mr. Karve to find a suitable husband for Balee.

Mr. Karve tried and succeeded. He was happy to be able to induce his uncle, Mr. Paranjpye, and his aunt to choose Balee as a bride for Raghunath. Four days after the marriage took place, Akka died.

Although he had the consolation that Akka was able to die in peace, Mr. Karve could not efface from his mind the cruel fact that it was the curse of widowhood that had brought about her early death.

Mr. Karve had unbounded reverence for his mother. The feelings he had for her taught him to regard all women as noble creatures. But he was pained to see the difference between her lot and that of many others. He knew some who were led astray by temptation and by the sinful motives of men. In his home-town, Murud, there was a girl who, though not a widow, lived like one, as her husband had deserted her and had disappeared. She was condemned to a life of servitude in the house of a distant relative who was a priest. One day, it became known that the poor girl had been caught in the snares of a designing man. Consequently she had to leave the house of her benefactor at once.

Where she went nobody knew. Mr. Karve saw her some years later at Narsoba Wadi where he had gone with Gangadharpant after the Public Service Examination at Kolhapur. She was there in the temple performing the *pradakshina*[1] with a rosary in hand. How did she come there? What did she do for her livelihood? With whom was she living? Was she alone or did the baby have a normal birth and was it living? As these thoughts crossed Mr. Karve's mind one after another, the woman saw him. She stood still for a moment, and then disappeared.

Since Radhabai's death, these memories frequently disturbed his mind. He pondered over them. Impetuosity was not in his nature, but he carefully thought over what he regarded as a call. Gradually he made up his mind, and nothing could then deter him from his resolve. Many of his friends tried to persuade him to take a second wife from

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1 *Pradakshina:* circumambulation from left to right of a person or an object as a kind of worship.

among girls of marriageable age. As a widower, he could marry only a widow. He resolved to take the step only after obtaining the approval of his mother and of Dada. He decided not to think of remarriage if they did not give their consent to his remarriage with a widow.

It was thus not surprising that the widower who had almost become a recluse when he left Bombay should now begin to entertain the idea of becoming once again a householder. The driving force was, once again, provided by the passion to do good—this time, to set a personal example in the field of social reform. When, some years before, Narharpant's younger sister, Godubai, who was a child widow, came to Bombay and stayed in the joint household at Gopinath Khatri's chawl, Mr. Karve could not have, in his wildest dreams, foreseen that she was going to be his partner in a life of nearly sixty years and in his great and noble effort to serve the cause of womanhood.

8

The Light, The Way And The Step

MORE than a hundred and fifty years ago, Keshavrao Joshi, a well-to-do resident of Deorukh (in Ratnagiri District) had taken a second wife when he had reached fifty, as his first wife bore him no children. The second wife was hardly ten years of age at the time of the marriage. This wife bore him seven children—four sons and three daughters. The eldest of the children, Balkrishna Keshav Joshi, was the father of Narharpant and Godubai. Godubai remembered with pain the story of the unequal marriage to which her poor grandmother had to yield. Her own lot, however, was hardly better. At eight, she was married to Mr. Natu after his first wife's death. He was seventeen years older. The marriage took place without any pomp at Makhjan where Mr. Natu's parents lived. After the marriage, Natu returned to Bombay where he worked as a Fellow in a college. Godu stayed at Makhjan. In about three months news of Natu's sudden death after a brief illness came from Bombay. Within three months of her marriage, and even before she knew what it was to be a wife, Godu was told that she had become a widow.

For twelve years she lived with Natu's parents and delighted their hearts. "Our son is still living," they would say, "the departed one was our daughter-in-law." She not only did all the household work and attended to the personal comforts of Natu's parents, but ably managed a large establishment with a farm, cattle and a number of servants. She displayed great ability and skill in doing all this.

When Godubai was twenty-one, she had to resign herself to the fate which inevitably befalls a widow—a shaven head and the red garment. Not that her father-in-law, or even her mother-in-law, wished to have the poor girl disfigured thus. In the midst of orthodoxy, they held liberal views and they were kind-hearted, but even they were helpless. They could not ignore or set aside the requirements of the *Shastras*[1]. It was the society that dictated in such circumstances and individuals who wished to live as respectable members of the society had to submit.

At twenty-one, Godubai experienced fresh pangs of the sorrow of widowhood, far keener this time than twelve years ago when she actually became a widow.

Once a year, Godubai went to Deorukh and stayed there with her parents for about a month. During one such visit, her brother, Narharpant also was there. He offered to take his sister with him to Bombay where she could have some education. Godubai's old mother did not like the idea. A little later, however, when Narharpant's wife died and he needed someone to keep house for him, his mother was obliged to give her consent. At that time, Godubai had come to Deorush to visit her elder sister, Akka, who was on her deathbed. Instead of returning to Makhjan, she went to Bombay with Narharpant.

At twenty-four, Godubai began to learn the alphabet and the arithmetic tables. Narharpant himself taught her for some time, but did not find the task easy. He was, therefore, glad to see an announcement in the papers about a school for girls which Pandita Ramabai proposed to start in Bombay.

Ramabai was a Sanskrit scholar. Before she was thirty, she had seen a great deal of the dark side of life. Her father, a shastri of rare erudition, died when she was very young, and his death was soon followed by that of her mother and elder sister, when they had all gone on a tour in the north. Left to the mercy of a strange world, Ramabai and her brother, Shrinivas, went to Calcutta in 1878. Ramabai was twenty at the time. The learned men of Calcutta were astonished at

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1 *Shastras:* Holy Scriptures.

the girl's accomplishments and at a public meeting she was given an address and the title of Pandita. While she was in Calcutta, her brother also died and thus she was left all alone. Some friends took pity on her and induced her to marry a Bengali youth, Bipinbihari Medhavi. Within eighteen months of the marriage, he died, leaving her with a daughter, Manorama, who was then a babe in arms. With Manorama and with a broken heart, Pandita Ramabai returned to Bombay. Shortly afterwards, she left the Indian shore and went to England and America where she stayed for about five years. During her stay in England, Ramabai became a Christian. On her return to Bombay, she thought of starting a school for girls. The Sharada Sadan was founded and formally opened on March 11, 1889.

Pandita Ramabai had announced that she would admit girls under twenty. Godubai was four years too old. Narharpant, however, was not to be discouraged. He went to the Pandita with his sister. To his surprise, he saw that she was willing to admit Godubai although she was more than twenty. In fact, she was the first applicant, and at the time of the opening of the Sharada Sadan, she was the first and the only student admitted to it.

With an umbrella in hand and shoes on her feet, Godubai walked every day from Girgaum to Chowpatty where the Sharada Sadan was housed in a bungalow. A widow with a shaven head wearing shoes was something new and abominable to the eyes of those who saw her.

Before she went to school every morning, Godubai had to cook food for the whole household which consisted of twelve persons. She had also to look after her little motherless nephew. This was more than she could manage. It was difficult to make her brother realise her hardships. When he was a student, he argued, he used to cook his own food and do everything else in the house. It did not interfere with his studies at all. He added that he could even win the Jagannath Shankarshet Scholarship in Sanskrit at the Matriculation Examination. What was possible in his own case, he thought, was also possible for his sister.

Pandita Ramabai was quick enough to appreciate her student's hardships.

"Will you come and stay in the school with me?" she asked.

Godubai would have gladly accepted the invitation, but Narharpant could not entertain the idea.

What was she to do? She began to feel sorry for having left her father-in-law's house where she was, she felt, happier. As a last resort, she asked her younger brother to write to her father. When Balkrishnapant received the letter he and his wife at once came to Bombay. They proposed that Godu should return to Deorukh with them. Godu did not like the idea. At last, Pandita Ramabai's proposal was accepted. It was arranged that Godubai should stay at the Sharada Sadan.

Even at the Sharada Sadan Godubai had to do work, but it was not very strenuous.

While Godubai stayed with her brother and before she joined Pandita Ramabai's School, Mr. Karve frequently assisted his friend (with whom he shared the joint establishment) in teaching Godubai. When she went to live with Pandita Ramabai, Mr. Karve sometimes accompanied Narharpant when he went to visit his sister at the Sharada Sadan.

Her stay at the Sharada Sadan was a great opportunity for Godubai. Pandita Ramabai was a woman of lofty ideas and possessed a strong will. She taught her students at the Sharada Sadan both by her words and by her example. She regarded work with the same devotion with which God is worshipped. She told her students that success in anything was not easy to attain.

"Woman has no greater enemy than herself." the Pandita told them, "You must equip yourselves to work out your own salvation."

She also sowed in their minds the seeds of social service.

"Even if you teach a single widow, I shall consider my efforts fully rewarded."

These words shone like beacons before Godubai's eyes.

In Pandita Ramabai's large heart there were many soft corners. Some of them were occupied by orphans. The kindness she showed to poor, forsaken children was an example

Godubai emulated and practised in her later life.

Pandita Ramabai shifted the Sharada Sadan to Poona about a year and a half after it was founded in Bombay. Godubai also went to Poona with the other inmates. About the same time, Mr. Karve also had gone to Poona to join the Fergusson College. Godubai used to go to Mehendale's Wada where Professor Karve stayed to meet her father or her brother during their visits to Poona.

Balkrishnapant Joshi, Godubai's father, was a kindly soul. He was a man of deep understanding and a wide outlook. A man of small means, with a large family to rear, he did not find it difficult to offer a little refreshment to the passers-by who stopped to have a little rest by the roadside in front of his house. He kept a large jar filled with water always ready for the thirsty. Among those who stopped to quench their thirst, there were mahars and mangs who carried heavy loads of firewood on their heads. Others in the village could not even think of allowing these men, untouchables as they were called by those who considered themselves superior of birth and caste, even to come near them. But Balkrishnapant welcomed them. He gave them water and frequently fed them with butter-milk and puffed rice. It seemed to him nothing unnatural or improper to befriend honest, poor men, irrespective of their caste. They never passed by without stopping at his door.

"Is Baba in?" they asked if they did not see Baba in his familiar seat at the door. As soon as he heard the friendly voice, Baba came out, leaving anything his hands were occupied with. Sometimes, he left even his *pooja*[1] and, clad as he was in the *Sovale*,[2] he came out to greet his friends and give them water and something to eat. Whenever there was butter-milk in the house, he gave it to these friends.

"What is this that you are doing?" Baba's well-wishers asked him. "You are polluting your *sovale* by coming out thus!"

In their eyes it was highly irreligious for him even to

1 *Pooja*: Worship of the family deity.

2 *Sovale*: holy cloth worn while performing pooja and taking meals.

speak to those men when he was wearing the holy garment. But Baba had no such notions.

"Far from it." he replied in a gentle voice. "Aren't these men the children of Rama even as you and I are? Why should we look upon them as unholy or inferior creatures? What right have we?"

The men brought with them small gifts like vegetables for their Baba. Baba accepted them with the same affection with which they gave them. They also brought to him after problems and worries. Baba gave them sound advice and did his best to help them.

Baba was a devotee of Rama. His devotion was not of the traditional type. His Rama was the all-pervading God, Creator and merciful Father of all men and women. His faith in Rama never faltered. He had three daughters and all of them had lost their husbands and one of them, the eldest, had died soon after she became a widow. His eldest son, Narharpant, was a widower. Baba took all these calamities with calm resignation, but he was always anxious to see that his children should be happy once again. Godubai had become a widow three months after her marriage. Why should he not get her married again? He was not afraid of the opposition of the society. Against the orthodox custom, he allowed Godubai to perform the worship of the family deity. "It was Rama's will that you should live thus," he said to her, "then He cannot refuse to accept worship from your hands."

After the Sharada Sadan was shifted to Poona, Baba came to Poona sometimes to visit his daughter. He stayed with Mr. Sathe, an old friend, but he made it a point to visit Professor Karve.

During one such visit, Baba said to Mr. Karve, "How long do you and Narhar wish to live like this?" He was referring to their life as widowers.

"I can't say what Narharpant has in his mind, Baba," Mr. Karve replied, "It's a long time since I met him last. And we have so far not discussed our plans for the future.

"Have you thought of your future? Do you wish to live for the rest of your life as a widower?"

"No. But I shall marry once again only if I have an opportunity to marry a widow."

"You don't have to take much trouble to look for a bride. Just say the word."

Professor Karve was amazed to hear these words from Baba's lips. He did not say anything for a few moments. Then he asked Baba,

"Are you really serious about what you suggest, Baba?"

"You know, Dhondu, that I never say anything that does not come from my heart."

"Well, then, if that is your wish, will you speak to Godubai and ask her first?"

Baba went to the Sharada Sadan the next day and spoke to his daughter.

This was not the first time that Baba had asked Godu about a second marriage, but whenever he spoke to her, she used to say:

"No, Baba, don't ask me to marry again. If widowhood is my lot, my second husband might also die and leave me in the same condition. I think I am all right as I am. My people at Makhjan are kind and good to me. I shall spend the remaining years of my life with them and find whatever happiness I can by serving them."

Pandita Ramabai also had tried to persuade Godubai when she suggested to her that she might accept one of the several proposals her Bengali friends had placed before her. Godubai told her that she did not at all wish to marry again.

This, however, was not her firm resolve. Sometimes she used to think of her future. Her younger sister, Krishni, also was a widow and she had a son. How long could they all continue to be a burden to their father or to their brother? If, on the other hand, she accepted the proposal of a second marriage, it might be possible for her to help both Krishni and her son.

Godubai told Pandita Ramabai about Baba's proposal. She did not like it.

"Mr. Karve does not look very strong and healthy." she said, "He is short and frail. He doesn't earn a good salary at the College. Besides, he has a twelve-year old son."

She was quite right, Godubai thought. The Pandita, however, had advised her to wait for a year and take a decision after a year.

However, she did not wait for a year. After giving the proposal much careful thought, Godubai decided that although there was a certain amount of risk in the second marriage, it would be wiser for her to accept the proposal. She was already twenty-seven and she would have to live for many years still at the Sharada Sadan to complete her education. It would be extremely difficult for her to find a job after that.

She told Baba about her decision which he conveyed to Mr. Karve.

The 11th of March, 1893, was the last day of Godubai's stay at the Sharada Sadan. The dawn brought with it mixed feelings of nervousness and delight. Her friends helped her to put on the wedding dress. She had her hair grown after she came to stay at the Sharada Sadan. After nearly twenty years she raised her finger for the first time to her forehead to decorate it with the red mark—*kumkum*. Then she went with Pandita Ramabai and her friends to the house of Mr. Annasaheb Bhandarkar, whose widowed daughter, Gangutai, was married to Lakshmanrao Bhandare in 1874. The wedding was to take place there. About forty friends who had responded to an invitation which was signed by Principal G.G. Agarkar of the Fergusson College and Rambhau Joshi, Professor Karve's old friend, were present. Vedamoorti Bhikambhatji Vaze, an orthodox priest, volunteered his services to officiate, and the marriage rites were performed in the midst of great enthusiasm but without any display or pomp. There was to be no giving away of the bride. Pandita Ramabai personally supervised the arrangements at the Sharada Sadan where she held a reception after the marriage rites. Godubai was her first student, and therefore her heart was filled with joy to see that she was going to have a home of her own. She gave her rich presents and the other students of the Sharada Sadan expressed their delight by presenting to Godubai a poem which was specially composed for the occasion by one of them.

No member of Mr. Karve's or Godubai's family was pre-

sent. Mr. Karve's mother and Dada had given him their unwilling consent, and it was too much for them to be present at the wedding. It was enough that Baba had taken the initiative in bringing about the marriage. Mr. Karve did not wish this fact to be known, but somehow, a reference to it appeared in Principal Agarkar's paper, the Sudharak. Even this reference gave sufficient ground to the people of Deorukh who imposed on Baba a heavy penalty including the payment of a hundred rupees for repairs to the three temples in the town, and then compelled him to take a *prayaschitta*.[1]

Professor Karve's second marriage with a widow had a mixed reception, but the voices of those who condemned it on social as well as religious grounds were far louder than those who expressed their approval. He was fortunate enough to be able to have the sympathy of his landlord, Mr. Gangadharpant Mehendale, who took no objection to his staying in his house after the marriage. Newspapers like the Indu Prakash and the Subodha Patrika of Bombay, the Dnyan Prakash and the Sudharak and the Kesari Poona, the Vaidarbha of Akola and the Vengurle Vritta of Vengurla wrote appreciatively and congratulated Professor Karve on the bold step he had taken. Others condemned the act in strong terms and expressed great concern over the effects of the step on the Hindu society as a whole.

Godubai whom her husband gave a new name, Anandibai, stood by her husband's side during the weeks and months that followed. They did not much mind the attacks of the newspapers, but it was more difficult for them to face the criticism and condemnations of personal friends and even relatives. It was inevitable that there should be some estrangement between them and their old friend, but the treatment they had from the people of Murud was too painful to bear. It was not altogether unexpected. When Professor Karve and Anandibai went to Murud during the next summer holidays, they had to face the full fury of the residents. When he visited his friends, they would give him a separate seat in order to avoid contamination from a man who, they

1 *prayaschitta*: atonement for a sin

felt, had sinned against religion. There were some who suggested that, having married a widow, Mr. Karve was no longer a brahmin and, therefore, his name should be removed from the list of members of the Murud Fund. At a meeting of the residents which was held on the day after their arrival, it was resolved that Mr. Karve and his wife should not be received in any house or at any public meeting or function. It was also resolved that should Dada receive his brother and sister-in-law in his house thereafter, he and the whole household should be subjected to a complete social boycott. The members of the Sneha Vardhak Mandal who met at Kelashi resolved by a large majority not to allow Mr. Karve to participate in their functions.

Mr. Karve was prepared for the severe measures adopted by the residents for his own boycott, but when he heard of the last clause which concerned his brother he was greatly pained. It meant that he was to be separated from his brother and his mother, from Ambatai and all his other relatives who loved him so much and for whom he had the same affection. He would have gladly suffered physical torture of any kind, but the idea of being separated from his dear ones was something he could not bear. Painful as the separation was to himself, the thought of causing pain to mother, to Dada and to Ambatai was even more painful. Dada had sorrows in full measure. His wife had died and he had lost as many as seven children, but he had not allowed the equanimity of his mind to be disturbed by these calamities. When, however, the terrible decision of the citizens about Dhondu was conveyed to him, he lost all balance. For a time, his state of mind became very pitiable and gave cause for anxiety. Mr. Karve knew of what was happening, but he was helpless. He was not allowed to enter his own house. He could not even speak to his mother or to Ambatai. It was only after Dada was taken by Mr. Paranjpye, his uncle to his house, that Mr. Karve could have an adequate idea of how hard the blow had hit him.

Mr. and Mrs. Karve stayed in a stable outside the family house. Their movements were closely watched by the women in the neighbourhood. These women spread exaggerated or

false reports, and took particular delight in spreading scandals about Anandibai. Mr. Karve bore it all without much difficulty, but poor Anandibai found it too hard. She knew hardly anyone in the town, and none even spoke to her a kind word. When the scandals about herself reached her ears, she lost her temper and sharply retorted to those who happened to be nearby.

Pondering on the consequences of the step he had taken, and particularly on the harsh treatment his family had received at the hands of the people of Murud, Mr. Karve began to wonder whether he would have taken the step if he had foreseen what was going to happen. He felt extremely miserable during the period when Dada's health was causing anxiety. With a sigh of relief at the news of his return to normal health, Mr. Karve decided not to brood over what had happened, to look ahead and not to look back. He turned towards the future with a resolve never to repent or to falter.

During the next ten or twelve years, he visited Murud thrice or four times, but never stepped into his own house. He had a hurried meeting or two with mother and Ambatai, and even these were full of delight for him and for them. For all of them, there was one consolation—they understood one another and knew that nothing under the sun could snap asunder the bonds of love that held their hearts together.

There were, however, a few friends whom Mr. Karve could meet and talk to. Even though they were not in sympathy with the idea of the remarriage of widows, they did not allow their personal relations to be disturbed by the step their friend had taken. One of them, Mr. Modak, who lived at Dapoli, was grieved to hear about the harsh treatment the people of Murud had given Professor Karve. Mr. Modak did not like the decisions of the members of the Sneha Vardhak Mandal or of the residents of Murud to impose restrictions on Mr. Karve and the other members of his family. He invited Mr. Karve and his wife to his house at Dapoli. They gladly accepted the invitation and were even more deeply touched by the affectionate reception they had not only from Mr. Modak but also from his wife and his aged mother. In

the midst of the miserable experience they had during their visit to Murud, this stay with Mr. Modak and his family was memorable. Mr. Modak could not altogether set aside his orthodox beliefs. Even he could not help giving Mr. Karve and his wife seats in a separate row at dinner time, but in all other things, he and his wife and his mother treated them with uncommon kindness.

To act without hesitation as the conscience dictates, and to do what is good and righteous, whether others approve of it or not—that has been Professor Karve's considered way of behaviour as a member and with the other members of the society. He, however, took the greatest care to see that no one was hurt by his behaviour. He avoided going to his intimate friends who, he knew, would not like to receive him for fear of being polluted by contact with him. When he went to his uncle, Mr. Paranjpye, at Murdi, he insisted on sitting in a separate row while dining, and removing the plate or plaintain leaf and cleaning the ground with cow dung himself after the meal was over. Even in later years, when he went to different places for collecting donations for his institution at Hingne, he stayed only with those who, he knew well, would have no objection.

A few years after his second marriage, Professor Karve went to Baroda on a brief visit. He went to the house of Mr. G. S. Sardesai, the well known writer of the *Riyasats*, but found that Mr. Sardesai had gone to Bombay. He had made himself sure that Mr. Sardesai would not mind having him as his guest, but he would be careful. So he told Mrs. Sardesai,

"You know I have married a widow and, therefore, it is not proper for me to sit the same row for meals in which others sit. So please let me sit in a separate row, and allow me to remove my plate and wash it."

When Mr. Sardesai returned, he told his wife that it was Annasaheb Karve's noble-heartedness that he had offered to sit in a separate row.

"We must remember, however, that in the case of a great man like him, we are not worthy of even removing his plate or washing it." He added, "I deem it a rare honour to have

the opportunity of sitting next to him at meal-time."

In 1922 or 1923 Professor Karve visited some places in the Sholapur district. From Sangola to Malshiras, a distance of several miles, he travelled on foot. As soon as his work of meeting the people and collecting donations was over, he started to go back to Sangola. It was midday and the day was hot. His friends at Malshiras pressed him to spend the rest of the day there. He would not, but he politely told them,

"I have already given you enough trouble by asking you to help my work at Hingne. Why should I cause you further trouble and worry by staying to have the meal with you?"

It was evident to those who were asking him to stay on that he was anxious to avoid causing any embarassment to anyone on account of his second marriage.

PART II

9

The Missionary

ON their return from Murud, Professor Karve and his wife settled down to a life of work and service. Both of them had their training for several years in the rough school of hardship and had learnt to scorn delight and love work for its own sake. The painful experience of Murud which they shared with each other became a unifier. It taught them to know each other more intimately, and drew them closer together.

But their adversaries thought otherwise. Shortly after their return to Poona, Narharpant came on a brief visit for some business of his own. Within a few days there were rumours. Someone said that Narharpant had come to Poona because he had disquieting news of frequent quarrels between his sister and her husband. What other reason could he have to come to Poona, another person asked. So they all concluded that Professor Karve and Anandibai could not get on together and were contemplating separation.

In Poona itself, Professor Karve did not have to suffer much persecution. After their marriage, Principal Agarkar of the Fergusson College invited them both to dinner. Mrs. Agarkar blessed Anandibai with the gift of a coconut and a blouse-piece[1] given only to married women who are not widows The other professors were not unsympathetic although their wives took care to see that Anandibai did not come too near

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१ खणनारळानें ओटी भरली.

them at functions like the *haldi-kunku*.[1]

Thirteen months after their marriage, their son, Shankar, was born. Anandibai continued to do all the household work practically till the last day of the confinement. There was no elderly person in the house, and she had to look after the comforts of the boarders. The two girls, Manu, Dada's daughter and Balee, Raghunath Paranjpye's wife, assisted her in the work, but she could not leave the responsibility to them. Before her second marriage, Mrs. Karve did not have to manage the kitchen continuously for a long time or to be solely responsible for the household work. For the first few weeks, therefore, she found it very difficult to adapt herself to the new responsibilities, and during the period of pregnancy, she found it more difficult still. But she was not a woman to be frightened or discouraged. She handled everything skilfully and bore it cheerfully.

Pandita Ramabai had made arrangements for Anandibai's confinement in the Mission Hospital in Mangalwar Peth. She walked to the Hospital, a distance of about a mile and a half, and the delivery took place two hours after she was admitted. Pandita Ramabai suggested that the boy may be named Shankar. Mr. Karve liked it because it meant 'One who bestows happiness.'

It was no longer possible for Anandibai to devote herself to her studies, but she did not give them up altogether. For a time she attended the Girls' School at Huzurpaga. After Shankar's birth, she had another confinement within twelve months, but the child—it was a boy—did not live. After this she resumed her studies at Huzurpaga. Parvatibai Athavale, her younger sister, came to Poona about this time for her son's education. Parvatibai was a widow. At Professor Karve's suggestion, she also joined the Huzurpaga School.

When Shankar was about two years old, Baba came to Poona on some business. It was his first visit to Poona since Godubai's second marriage. Although he did not stay with the Karves, he visited them frequently. When he saw his

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1 *Haldi-kunku*: a social function held by women (who are not widows).

little grandson. Shankar, for the first time, he could not contain his joy. With tears rolling down his cheeks, he folded his hands and, looking upward, he said, "Inscrutable are Thy ways, O Lord Rama! Who ever imagined that we would have the good fortune to see Thee in the blissful face of this little angel!" Baba's words and the affection with which he took the little boy in his lap and embraced him not only filled the hearts of Shankar's parents with joy but gave them the comfort of having done a thing which the old man was proud.

One of Professor Karve's ideas was that every person, even a woman, should acquire some skill which would enable him or her to stand on his or her own legs if the need arose. He therefore secured admission for Anandibai in the Dufferin Hospital at Nagpur to undergo a course in nursing and midwifery. Anandibai stayed in Nagpur for a year. She had taken Shankar with her. She found no difficulty in having him looked after while she was busy. Soon after their arrival in Nagpur, he became the favourite of all the workers in the hospital including Dr. Harris who was in charge of the hospital. As he went about with a broken thermometer in his hand to take the temperature of the patients he became known as 'the little Doctor'. Anandibai felt proud of the boy and wished that when he grew up he would be a doctor and that she would be able to assist him in his work as a nurse. The first part of her wish, as she says in her reminiscences, was fulfilled, but she sadly confesses that she could be of no help to her eldest son, Dr. Shankar D. Karve, who is a distinguished physician in East Africa.

Professor Karve's marriage with a widow was the first step he took in the field of social reform. He now felt within him a call to take up the work of educating public opinion in support of the cause of the marriage of widows and of doing every thing possible to make it easy for those who were willing to take the step he had taken. He felt sad to see that although it was over forty years since the Widow Remarriage Act was passed, the number of such remarriages was very small. He therefore decided to make an organised effort in this direction

Vishnushastri Pandit had started the Vidhava-vivahottejak Mandal, but it did not survive him. After Vishnushastri's early death in 1875, the cause of the marriage of widows languished. There were earnest advocates like Madhavarao Ranade and Sadashivrao Kelkar, but they could not devote all their attention and time to the work of preaching adequately the ideas of social reform among the people.

Mr. Wamanrao Kolhatkar of Vidarbha was an ardent supporter. With his help, Professor Karve convened a meeting of sympathisers at Wardha. The meeting was held on December 31, 1893. It was decided that whatever work they undertook should be free from complications and controversies as far as possible. They therefore excluded from their deliberations and the objects they framed for the new Widow Marriage Association founded by them problems such a inter-caste marriages or the different modes of having marriages solemnised. In a way, it was their wish to follow the line of least resistance. Mr. Karve became the Secretary and Poona was selected as the headquarters of the Association which was fortunate enough to have Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar as its President. Membership of the Association was open only to those who had married widows or those who did not hesitate to dine with persons who had married widows. There was a separate class of sympathisers. A member or a sympathiser was to pay a day's income as his subscription.

One of the first activities which the Association undertook immediately after it was started was a hostel for the children of re-married widows. This hostel was started in Professor Karve's own house. The hostel did not continue long but the Association gave financial help to needy children born of remarriages of widows for many years after the hostel was closed.

During his vacations, Professor Karve went on tours for popularising the objects of the Association. During these tours he had some interesting experience. He found that there were many persons who had sympathy for the cause but they refused to declare their opinions openly.

The founder-members of the Association were seven. Among them were Mr. Kolhatkar of Vidarbha and Mr. Phadke

of Hyderabad (Dn.). Mr. Kolhatkar had himself married a widow, and had brought about several such marriages in Vidarbha. Mr. Phadke had chosen as his first bride the widowed daughter of Mr. Sadashivrao Govande of Poona. Bhaskarrao Govande, brother of Mr. Phadke's wife, had taken the initiative in bringing about his sister's second marriage and he was Professor Karve's third colleague in the work of the Widow Marriage Association.

The Association organised annual gatherings of the families of active supporters with a view to attracting public opinion. The first gathering was held in Poona in May 1894. Five families with a total number of twenty-two members attended. Among those others who also were invited and who attended were Principal G. G. Agarkar, Professor C. G. Bhanu, and Rao Bahadur C. N. Bhat. The gatherings were not held regularly every year, but whenever they were held in later years, they attracted a fairly large number of persons and were enthusiastically patronised. The practice of holding such gatherings was discontinued in later years, but the Widow Marriage Association took up the celebration of the Widow Remarriage Day on the 25th of July every year as on that date in 1856 the Widow Remarriage Act was passed.

With the zeal of a missionary, Professor Karve undertook tours. In December 1894, he went to Madras where the annual session of the Indian National Congress was held. On his way, he halted at Pandharpur and Sholapur. On his returned journey he visited places like Hubli and Belgaum. In every place, he first established contacts with the prominent residents and then, with their help, had a public meeting arranged. He addressed the meeting and explained the purpose of his visit. Then he went from house to house to make collections. In 1895 he organised two tours, one in April and May and the other in September and October. Mr. Karve spent very little during the tours. He generally travelled in the third class.

In 1895 the name of the Association was changed to 'The Association for the Removal of Restrictions to the Marriage of Widows.' This change was suggested by Professor Karve himself who preferred it to the older one as he felt that it

would be easier to win the sympathy by society if the object of the Association, as suggested by its name, was a more modest one—merely to remove retrictions that existed. Mr. Karve worked very hard for the Association for a few years. As he worked and as he met people in different places, he realised that the objections to the marriage of widows arose more out of the traditional way of looking at the reform. Most of those who opposed it did so on religious grounds. They could not give their whole-hearted support because there was something deep rooted in them which revolted. They could not explain what it was, but it was there, and with all the reasoning they could not get rid of it. As he pondered over this state of affairs, his thoughts turned to another handicap under which the widows were labouring. He began to think of taking up the more effective programme of the education of widows. Even a good many widows themselves who would not give a single thought to a proposal to marry again would heartily come forward to avail themselves of opportunities to receive the benefits of education.

In the midst of his efforts to educate public opinion in favour of the reform he had nearest his heart, he kept a watchful eye to see if he could actually bring about the marriage of a widow. Whenever such a marriage took place, he regarded it as a great achievement. During the remaining seven years of the last century, he was directly or indirectly instrumental in bringing about five widow marriages. At the last of these, the bride was his own niece, Manu. It was he who had induced Dada to give his daughter in marriage to a lad who was poor but intelligent. Manu's husband, Bhiku Biwalkar, completed his education under Professor Karve's supervision, first in Bombay and then in Poona. By the time he passed his Matriculation Examination, Manu also completed her education and obtained the Third Year Certificate from the Women's Training College. Professor Karve tried and succeeded in getting jobs for Bhiku and Manu in Vidarbha. Before they could both go there to take up the jobs, Bhiku died. Manu went to Deoolgaon alone and served there for some years. In 1899, Mr. Karve was able to induce his colleague in the Fergusson College, Professor G. C. Bhate, who

had lost his first wife, to marry again. His marriage with Manu took place in Poona. Filled with overflowing happiness at this event as Professor Karve was, his joy was still greater when he received on the day of the marriage and in the midst of the festivities the happy news of Raghunath Paranjpye's brilliant success at Cambride. He had become a Senior Wrangler in the final Mathematics Tripos Examination.

While he was doing the work of the secretary of the Association for the Removal of Restrictions to the Marriage of Widows, Professor Karve was invited to give a talk on "Twenty-five years of the Widow Remarriage Movement" in Bombay in the Winter Lectures Series (Hemant-Vyakhyan Mala). The meeting was held in the Arya Samaj Mandir. The hall was filled to capacity. Mr. Justice Ranade was in the Chair. Prof. Karve spoke for about an hour. He did not speak like an orator, but he spoke with such earnestness and depth of feeling that his audience heard with rapt attention every word he uttered. When he sat down, a young man, Gajanan Bhaskar Vaidya, got up and began to address the meeting. In his speech he attacked those who, he thought, were responsible for the unsatisfactory progress of the movement, and his attack was mainly directed towards the Chairman of the meeting, Mr. Justice Ranade who, instead of marrying a widow after the death of his first wife, had married a maiden of tender age. The speaker spoke with vehemence and his attack was vitriolic. Although what he was saying about Mr. Justice Ranade's second marriage could not be denied, the audience felt that he was over-doing it and became restless and was even excited when he repeated certain words with gestures again and again. When he sat down, Mr. Justice Ranade rose to speak. He was perfectly undisturbed and calm. With humility that added grace and charm to his words, the Chairman said that he agreed with every word of what the speaker who had preceded him said and he agreed also that Mr. Sadashivrao Kelkar should have been in the chair. As he began with the words "We are lame and weak persons. So I say to my young friend: You lead us and we shall follow you with whatever strength and ability

we possess in our frailty." Professor Karve's heart was moved to deep admiration as he heard these words. After the noble-hearted confession, Mr. Ranade spoke for about half an hour and as he spoke, he held the audience spell-bound. When he sat down, the audince had completely forgotten what had happened before he rose to speak.

As years rolled on, Professor Karve continued to suffer on account of his second marriage and his advocacy of the marriage of widows. What he felt most keenly was the estrangement which was created and perpetuated between his relatives and himself. Dada could not send his son to Dhondu's house for his education in Poona, and so he kept him with Professor Paranjpye. Mother and Dada, when they came to Poona on their way to Pandharpur on a pilgrimage, did not stay with him. During her last illness, his mother had asked everybody not to write to Dhondu about it. When he knew about it, it was, alas, too late. He reached Murud for the last *darshan* after everything was over. By this time, however, Mr. Karve had trained his mind to maintain its equanimity against heavy odds. Often has he quoted the oft-quoted maxim which says that truly great are those whose hearts are delicate like the flowers and at the same time harder than the thunderbolt. There are very few great men whose mental attitude and demeanour are more akin to this maxim than that of Professor Karve.

10

Anath—Balikashram

AFTER three years of ceaseless effort, it became clear to Professor Karve that the problem of the marriage of widows was not likely to be solved only by educating public opinion in favour of it. Opposition on religious grounds was the most formidable obstacle, and it came even from men whose minds were enlightened with modern education. But this was not the only obstacle. There were a large number of widows who could not make up their minds and many of them even refused to consider proposals for a second marriage. Among them were those who had children. It was not unnatural that they thought of the future of their children before they thought of their own. Professor Karve had an instance of this type among his relatives. It was his sister-in-law, Anandibai's younger sister. Krishni was the name her parents gave her, but in later life she was known as Parvatibai—Parvaitbai Athavale, widow of Mahadev Athavale. Parvatibai was married to Mahadev when she was eleven—an advanced age as it was considered in those days. Her husband was poor and lame of one foot but her father did not mind his poverty or physical deformity, as in the midst of his own poverty it was impossible for him to find a more well-to-do or better looking son-in-law. No one knew what the girl herself thought of the proposal and nobody asked her. The proposal was presented to her parents by the wife of a Mamlatdar who thought of doing them a good turn and it was immediately accepted by them.

Parvatibai had a happy married life for nine years. She had three children of whom only the middle one lived. It was a boy and she gave him the name, Narayan. Her husband died at Deorukh when Parwatibai was in her twentieth year. Parvatibai continued to stay in her father's house with Nana, her two-year old son.

The little boy could not understand why his mother looked so different now.

"Why do you wear this red saree, mother?" Nana asked her, "And what happened to your hair?"

"They have gone after your father, my child," Parvatibai answered, making a great effort to hold back her tears.

As Nana grew, he became the centre of Parvatibai's desires and aspirations.

Parvatibai's elder sister, Baya, (Godubai) who also was a widow lived in Bombay with their brother. Later she joined Pandita Ramabai's Sharada Sadan. In 1893, she was married to Professor Karve. Baya's second marriage was a turning point also in Parvatibai's life.

About twenty months after Baya's marriage, Parvatibai went to Poona with her parents on their way to Banaras on a pilgrimage.

"Why should Krishni go with you to Banaras?" Baya asked her parents, "Let her stay here with me. It is not advisable for her to go as she has her son to look after. A pilgrimage to Banaras is full of risks. If something happens to her during the journey, the poor boy will be motherless."

Baba would have agreed but their mother protested.

"I don't want her to be influenced by you and your example, Baya," Mother said, "I don't want her to take the wrong path as you have done, and thus bring shame once again on the family."

Turning to Krishni, Mother continued,

"Look here, my child, you can go back to Deorukh if you don't want to go with us, but if you stay here with your sister, I'll put an end to my life."

Parvatibai's parents proceeded to Banaras without her. Baya tried to persuade her to stay with her in Poona, but

she would not, as she had given her solemn promise to her mother. She returned to Deorukh with Nana.

Before long, however, it became necessary for Parvatibai to send Nana to Poona for his education. When she herself went to Poona six months later to see her son, she found that Professor Karve was full of plan of starting Vidhavashram, a house for widows.

"What help will you give me if and when the Vidhavashram is opened?" he asked Parvatibai.

"I don't know," she answered, "but I think I can do the cooking."

It was clear to Professor Karve that his sister-in-law could not be persuaded to think of a second marriage. The only alternative was to give her facilities to learn and to educate her.

One of the persons for whom Professor Karve had great reverence was Pandita Ramabai, and he watched her work and the progress of her Sharada Sadan with admiration. In the transformation that had come over his wife, Baya, he could see what Pandita Ramabai could achieve and what possibilities an institution like the Sharada Sadan had. Within four years of its foundation, Sharada Sadan was able to attract more than sixty students, most of whom were widows. While so many came forward to take advantage of the facilities of education, the number of widows who found it possible to marry was much smaller. Why not, then, take up the work of providing educational facilities for the widows? After all, the object was to enable them to have a new and happy life. If an effort was made to open and conduct an institution of the type of the Sharada Sadan, Professor Karve felt, it would yield the desired fruit more effectively and also more speedily.

Since July of 1893, the Sharada Sadan had incurred the displeasure and wrath of most of its sympathisers. About twelve of its students were reported to have been converted to Christianity. The reports were soon confirmed and they spread all over Maharashtra like wild fire. The worst fears of Pandita Ramabai's critics and enemies had come true. Newspapers filled their columns with condemnation not only of what actually had happened but also of the motive of the

founder of the Sharada Sadan who, it was argued and easily believed, had started it with no other object than that of swelling the numbers of Christian converts. The members of the Advisory Board of the Sadan headed by Dr. Bhandarkar withdrew their support from it and, in a joint statement which they issued, they warned the public that it would be dangerous for anyone to send his daughter or any other female relative to the Sharada Sadan.

A feeble attempt was made shortly after these happenings to found what the promoters would call a Hindu Sharada Sadan. The attempt succeeded hardly beyond the preliminary arrangements and fell through not for want of support but on account of the absence of competent workers.

In 1887 a Home for Widows was started in Bengal. Its founder was Babu Shashi Pada Bannerjee and it was started at Baranagar, a place not far from Calcutta. A similar institution was started by Vireshalingam Pantalu in Madras. Prof. Karve had heard of these institutions and of the very slow progress they had made on account of lack of proper organisation and adequate support. He was at the time engaged in his activities to promote the work of the Widow Marriage Association.

As he thought more and more of the poor success which he had in the promotion of the cause of marriage of widows, he began to feel that if efforts could be made to found and conduct an institution for the education of widows on more tactful lines avoiding the mistakes which had caused the failure of the other institutions, an institution so founded would thrive and do solid work if persons inspired with zeal came forward to run it.

An undertaking of this kind must have adequate financial backing. Professor Karve knew this well, and it was not an easy task to collect funds which were necessary for the purpose. But he did not worry much about this problem. Difficult as it was, it was not insurmountable. He had faith in his heart and an irresistible desire pushed him on. His faith had by this time taught him to look upon all good work as worthy of being undertaken, whatever the difficulty. He had also learnt how not to be disappointed by failure to over-

come fears of failures if the cause was and other channels could be opened.

In a letter which he wrote to the editor of the Sudharak, he explained all these points and gave an idea of the plan he had before him. It was a modest plan. He would begin with a small home for about five or six widows, but before that became possible, he would start an organisation for making provision for the boarding, lodging and education of that small number in the Girls' High School and its hostel. Even for such a modest beginning funds were necessary, and he offered a thousand rupees from his own savings.

"As long as I live," he declared, "I shall myself add to the interest on this amount whatever is required for the maintenance of just one widow, even if I find that financial help does not come forth from other sources. My faith in the goodness of men, however, is too great for me to imagine that such help would not be forthcoming at all. At any rate, I shall try and try earnestly with all my might, with all my faith and with all my soul."

This letter appeared in the Sudharak on May 25, 1896. He pursued the matter still further by calling on June 14, 1896 a meeting of his friends who supported his plan. The meeting was held at the residence of Rao Bahadur V. M. Bhide. Sixteen persons were present. At the meeting it was resolved to found the 'Anath Balikashram Association'. Dr. Ram Krishna Gopal Bhandarkar whose advocacy for all reform movements and particularly those for raising the status of women was well known, was elected President of the Mandali and Professor Karve himself became Secretary. His proposal of making an immediate beginning by providing accommodation in the hostel of the Girls' High School for the widows who applied for help was accepted.

On January 24, 1897, as secretary, he submitted to the Mandali the following report:—

"Dhondo Keshav Karve went on a collection tour for two months and a quarter. He visited Bombay, Thana, Baroda, Ahmedabad, Akola and Amaraoti. The collections made in these places and in Poona itself has enabled the new institution to provide all educational facilities including lodging

and boarding for seven widows, and on the day the report is submitted to leave a balance of Rs. 3,200-14-11."

At the end of 1897, the Mandali had a balance of Rs. 5,633-11-4.

Nothing succeeds like success. When the members of the Mandali met to consider and adopt the report for the year, it was decided that the time was now favourable for undertaking the project of having a building and an establishment of its own for future activities and their expansion. It was, however, resolved that instead of utilising the balance for this purpose, a separate collection should be undertaken. This was Professor Karve's own suggestion and it was accepted by all the other members.

How was he to undertake this task of collecting funds for the new undertaking? Even he was not sure of collecting a sufficient amount, but that did not matter. Providence helps those who help themselves. He had already given a thousand rupees from his own savings when the Mandali was founded, and he had nothing more to give. There was, however, his Life Insurance Policy of five thousand rupees. He could raise a loan on it.

The most formidable difficulty, however, was not that of finance. No suitable site was available for the building. It was, therefore, not immediately necessary for him to use his Insurance Policy as a security for taking a loan.

That was a good thought—that of making use of his Insurance Policy for the Mandali's work. Professor Karve would not let go in vain any opportunity of devoting whatever he had for a good cause. He would surely do something about this proposal which, he felt, was too good to be dropped only because there was no immediate need. An institution like the one he had founded would always need financial help. He could therefore utilise the Life Insurance Policy to make provision for a future occasion.

The thought and the urge was good, but he was afraid the urge might lose its sharpness if he did not act immediately. He could bind himself by making a pronouncement and a promise.

Standing before a small audience at Nagpur where he

had gone for collecting funds, he declared his intention of assigning the Policy to the Balikashram.

"Friends, this is my intention and I wish to act upon it," he said, "and if you find that I have not given effect to it, I want you to do me a favour. I want you to chastise me, humiliate me for being false to my promise."

On April 18, 1899, Professor Karve handed over the Policy to the Trustees of the Ashram after assigning it to the Ashram. In the annual report of the Ashram for that year, it is recorded as "a gift from a gentleman".

The same year, the Anath Balikashram was started as an institution in a house which was rented in Sadashiv Peth near Peru Gate. The house belonged to Mr. Gore. Professor Karve shifted his own residence to the same house.

It was Professor Karve's desire that the Ashram should not be opened in the heart of the city. Rao Bahadur Gokhale offered him a piece of land at Hingne. It was not accepted immediately as the members of the Mandali found it unsuitable for many reasons. During the outbreak of the plague epidemic in 1899, however, it became necessary for the Mandali to shift the Ashram temporarily to Mr. Gokhale's farmhouse at Hingne. Having conducted the Ashram in Mr. Gokhale's house for four months, Professor Karve began to feel that it would be much better to have it at Hingne permanently than shift it back to Sadashiv Peth and the crowded surroundings. The project was taken up and in June 1900, a cottage was constructed. It cost only five hundred rupees.

There were at this time eight widows in the Ashram and there were two more inmates who were unmarried girls.

Narmadabai, who had left Poona after her brother-in-law's second marriage had returned by now. She gladly accepted the work of supervising the kitchen and looking after the comforts of the girls. A retired teacher took up the work of teaching them. Professor Karve himself continued to have his home in the old rented place—Gore's wada. After his work at the College, Professor Karve came home, had a hurried dinner, and then went to Hingne. In the evening and in the early hours of the morning he gave lessons to the girls. At about eight in the morning he returned to Poona

to begin another day's work at the College.

While her husband had all his time thus taken up by the College and the Ashram at Hingne, Baya managed the home and the children almost single-handed in their Poona residence. It made her sad sometimes to think of her lonely life. In her moments of sadness, she used to wonder why her husband at all thought of the second marriage if he was to lead a life like this, devoting all his attention to the activities of the Ashram. Dinkar, their second son, was six months old at the time. She was not well. Frequent attacks of fever had made her very weak. It was not possible for her to have a brahmin woman to assist her in her work, for none would work in the house of a widow who had married again. Baya had not forgotten the valuable lessons her old teacher, Pandita Ramabai, had taught her. She thought of befriending the friendless, those whom the society looked upon as outcastes. They found shelter in her house and were of some help to her.

Sometimes even these women whom she helped caused her worry. One of them was a girl of twenty. She had been admitted to the Orphanage at Pandharpur where she had given birth to a child she did not want to claim to be hers. Leaving the child at the Orphanage, she came to Poona where Baya gave her shelter. One of the boarders in Baya's house was a medical student. He became friendly with this girl and after some time they decided to marry as soon as his education was completed and he became a doctor. Baya was aware of the growing intimacy between the two but before she could do anything, it already led them astray. When Baya came to know of what had happened, she advised them to get married immediately and gave the medical student an assurance that she would look after the girl and her child when it was born, till he became a doctor. Her advice was not accepted. The boy returned to his parents. After some time, his father gave Baya the heart-breaking news that the boy had put an end to his life by taking poison. Baya still had to think about the girl's future. She could not be sent again to Pandharpur. So Baya sent her to Nagpur. The child died soon after its birth. The girl herself continued to

stay there with a nurse for a time but did not live long.

It is strange that Baya should have found fault with the way her husband was engaging himself in activities outside the pale of the responsibility of rearing the family. Was she not doing the same? Her health was not equal even to the limited duties of the household. Still she took under her roof the poor, the homeless and the helpless. She gave them not only shelter and protection but all that a home stands for. When the woman who had returned from Pandharpur had allowed herself to be caught in a different situation, Baya was worried not only about the girl, but also about the reputation of the Ashram her husband was conducting. It was an institution for widows. If it became known that a girl staying in Baya's house which the people identified with the Ashram her husband was conducting, had gone astray, it would be a calamity which the management would find hard to meet. Baya was aware of all this. She handled the situation with care and tact and saw that the name of the Ashram was not tarnished. Professor Karve's wife, by adding to her own responsibilities such cares and worries, was only supplementing the good work he was doing. She bore them all patiently and even gladly. Her husband's example and the training she had from Pandita Ramabai inspired and sustained her.

With all his mind devoted to the work of the Balikashram Professor Karve hardly ever thought of the hardships he had to suffer. They were many and varied. Every evening, he walked from Poona to Hingne, a distance of about four miles. The road was extremely bad and during the rains it was full of mud. But he never thought the bad condition of the road or the fatigue of walking for he knew that the workers and inmates of the Ashram would be disappointed if he did not go there even for one day. All the way he carried a good load on his back,—the provisions to be carried from Poona to Hingne. The smile on the happy, innocent faces of the girls who greeted him showed how anxiously they would be waiting for him. In a moment he would forget all the fatigue of the journey, all the worries of the day.

Professor Karve was not so indifferent to the problems of his own family as Baya sometimes thought. Whenever some-

one was ill, his mind was torn between the cares of home and the work he had undertaken which made it necessary for him to go to Hingne. With a heavy heart, and sometimes with tears coming out of his eyes, he answered the stern call of duty. Not without a biting conscience did he leave his home for Hingne on an evening when he knew well that his presence would have been of help to his wife and would have given her strength and courage. But he could make no distinction between the family of his home—his wife and children—and the larger family at Hingne.

It was singularly fortunate for the founder of the Balikashram that his sister-in-law, Parvatibai, who had come to visit her son, Nana in 1902, did not return to Deorukh to her parents. To Professor Karve's question, she had given the answer that all she could do for the institution he was thinking of founding was to look after the kitchen, but he had a different plan for her. He knew she was capable of doing greater things. She had come to Poona some months before the ashram was started. So he suggested that she might get herself trained as a teacher. He tried and succeeded in obtaining for her a monthly scholarship from Government. After her training was over, she would have to serve in a Government School for at least three years. Professor Karve wanted her to join the Ashram immediately and so he approached Mr. Selby, Director of Public Instruction, with a request that Parvatibai may be released from the binding. The Director of Public Instruction was kind enough to release her immediately and her services were made available for the Balikashram.

While she was at the Training College, Parvatibai used to go to Hingne on Saturdays and spend the Sundays there. On Saturday evening she walked by the side of Professor Karve and listened to his words. He described to her the pitiable condition of women in the country and of widows in particular. She pondered over every word he uttered and gradually made up her mind to devote her life to the cause he had undertaken. Those walks and the words she heard gave her greater training than she was able to have at the Training College.

Dinkar was about four years old now. His father proposed that they might all go and stay at Hingne. Baya readily accepted the proposal. They had a cart drawn by a bullock which made the daily journey to Poona and back easier. One day, however, as Professor Karve and Shankar were going to Poona, the cart overturned on the Lakdi Bridge. Mr. Karve himself escaped with minor injuries but Shankar had a heavy shaking. Baya cursed herself for having accepted the proposal to change their place of residence.

At Hingne, the Karve family had their meals at the common mess. Baya joined the other workers and did most of the work by turns. The other workers learnt from her how to practise economy in everything. She would have liked to do more responsible jobs but she was pained to see that others did not think much of her ability. She had confidence in her own competence and ability. And was she not the wife of the founder of the Balikashram? There was something else that gave her still greater pain. She was a widow at one time and had married a second time. The workers and even the inmates of the Ashram could not forget this fact. They would not accept water touched by her. She had to sit in a separate row at meal-time. She knew her husband who willingly accepted all these distinctions and restrictions would not give her his sympathy and would not even listen to her. She therefore kept her sorrows to herself and suffered silently. There were occasions which would have roused the indignation of any other person, but she knew how to control herself.

At Hingne Bhaskar, the third and youngest son was born. Shortly after his birth, Shankar had an illness. It was enteric fever which did not leave him for nearly three months. The poor, anxious mother, who was also a trained nurse, nursed him and watched over his sick bed. But she had to look after the two other boys also. Bhaskar was a few months old, and he had great trouble on account of teething. He could hardly get his mother's milk. Baya's heart was torn between the sick boy and the youngest one. "Remove the boys at once to some healthier place." The doctor told her. It was not easy to find a suitable place, but after some

effort Baya was able to go with the three boys to Lonavla where two rooms were available in the bungalow which belonged to Mr. Vaman Abaji Modak. No one else went with her. Even her sister, Parvatibai, did not go as she could not leave her teaching work in the Ashram. Professor Karve spent only the week-ends with them at Lonavla. Six-year old Dinkar was his mother's only help-mate in her difficulties. While she gave her attention to Shankar who was convalescing but was still far from normal in health, Dinkar looked after his younger brother. After about a month, Shankar began to feel better. Then they returned to Hingne, but Baya could not think of staying there permanently after all the bitter experience she had there. They, therefore, came to Poona where they rented rooms in Narayan Peth.

Professor Karve knew what his wife suffered, and secretly admired her fortitude. As years rolled on, he realised more and more what a blessing his wife was. Sometimes he was pained to see what and how much she had to bear, but he had the satisfaction that she bore it well. His satisfaction and delight were greater still when he saw her in the midst of the poor needy people who came to their house at Narayan Peth and to whom she gave the little food that was left over. She gave them butter-milk of which she had plenty and gave in plenty, and old clothes. Among those who received the little gifts from her and blessed her were the mahars and dhangars and others who were looked upon by the high-caste people of the locality as untouchables. Baya treated them with the same tenderness which she bestowed on her sons.

11

Successes And Trials

AS Professor Karve lay in his narrow bed, he thought about the future, not his own but that of the Ashram. The other person in the room also had the same thoughts in her mind as she watched the calm, undisturbed expression on his face.

It was on the day on which Professor Karve and his son were thrown out of the cart on the Lakdi Bridge. The injuries he had would not allow him to move about, much less to undertake a journey for some time. He should have gone on his usual tour for collecting donations for the Ashram. While Professor Karve sorrowfully thought of the programme which was upset, Parvatibai was thinking of finding some way to relieve him of his anxiety. As she sat near the bed thinking, an idea occurred to her.

"Anna" she said, disturbing the silence of the room, "I have an idea. If you give me permission, I should like to go out this time for collecting donations."

"You don't mean it, do you?" Anna asked her with astonishment in his voice and expression.

"I do," Parvatibai replied in a confident tone, "and I have a plan to place before you."

"Let me hear it at least," said Anna a little unconcernedly. He still thought that it was too difficult a task for a woman like Parvatibai to undertake.

"One of the girls in the Ashram will soon be going to Khandva for the holidays. She has a Railway free pass and

it entitles her to take a servant with her. She will be only too glad to allow me to travel with her."

Anna kept quiet. He began to realise that there was something reasonable in what she was saying.

"If I go with this girl," Parvatibai continued, "there will be no expenses and so even if I am not able to collect anything, the Ashram will not be put to a loss on my account".

Anna gave his consent. He was much relieved to see that some work would be done during the summer holidays although he was unable to go out.

Parvatibai was very glad to have the opportunity. She made all the preparations for the journey, but on the night before the day of their departure, Nana, her son, had fever. The temperature rose to 104 degrees. How could she leave her son in that condition? She felt particularly sorry that she would not be able to keep the promise she had given to Anna.

"What shall I do now, Anna?" she asked him. "Can I leave Nana in this condition?"

"It's for you to decide. But I can tell you this: Even if you go, Venubai or Kashibai will take care of Nana and you need not worry."

Venubai Namjoshi and Kashibai Deodhar were the two life-workers who had joined the Ashram.

With an unhesitating mind, Parvatibai decided to entrust her son to the care of her colleagues, and went to Khandva with the girl.

At Khandva she met some of the residents. A middle-aged widow dressed in the red saree was an unusual sight for them. When she told them that she would like to address a meeting, they would not believe her. Some of them were even inclined to ridicule her. At last, an Inamdar agreed to give her an opportunity. She went to his house in the evening when some of his friends met for a chat over *pan supari*.[1] There were about twelve men in the drawing room of the house. None of them took notice of Parvatibai as she entered the room. She began her speech and, without waiting to see

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1 betel leaves and betel nuts.

if they were listening to her, went on. After she had finished, she sent round a piece of paper. To her pleasant surprise, she found that she had been able to collect thirteen rupees. From Khandwa she went to Indore where she had a better reception. When she returned to Hingne after completing her tour, she was able to hand over to Anna a collection of five hundred rupees. Anna was filled with joy at the success which she had in her first venture.

For a year or two after she joined the Ashram, Parvatibai worked as Superintendent of the Ashram, but since her successful visit to Khandwa, Professor Karve utilised her services almost exclusively for the collection of work. During their visit to Banaras he was able to see for himself how eminently fitted she was for the work. People from different parts of the country had gathered there for the Social Conference. As they were engaged in important deliberations it would be useless, Professor Karve thought, to speak to them about their small venture. Parvatibai could not bear the idea of going back empty-handed. She went to the delegates' camp and, making use of the broken Hindi she could speak, she created interest and sympathy for their cause in the delegates from Bengal and other places. They promised to give her a few minutes at night. She prepared Kashibai Deodhar to say a few things in English. They were able to collect about forty rupees.

In a distant corner of Rajputana there was the native state of Tonk. Mr. Damodarpant Phatak of Poona had served in the Tonk State for many years. After his retirement, Damodarpant wished to devote the remaining years of his life to some public cause. While he was thinking about the best way in which he could serve the public, his eldest son who had become a doctor died of palgue. This sorrow darkened the old man's life and his immediate thought was to console the poor young woman who had so suddenly lost her husband and to provide for her and for the fatherless children. Even in the midst of sorrow, however, the thought of doing some social work did not leave him.

On the third day after his son's death, he went to Professor Karve, who had just started the Balikashram at Hingne.

They had not met before. Professor Karve had gone out. Damodarpant left his name and address. Next day, Professor Karve himself went to his house. Damodarpant introduced himself and after telling him of his sorrow, he said he would like to see the Ashram. A visit was arranged. Mr. Phatak who spent about four hours at the Balikashram felt much comforted, and when he returned he told Yashodabai, his wife, of what he had seen at Hingne. Then he paid three visits to the Ashram with Yashodabai. On each occasion, they found much solace for their grieving hearts. There was something in the world which can replace personal anxieties and anguish, they felt. For the founder of the Ashram, they began to have great admiration. The desire to help him became so irresistible that, one day, the two brought to him a sum of five hundred rupees and begged of him to accept it as their humble gift to the Ashram.

"We had saved this amount for a pilgrimage to Shri Rameshwar" Damodarpant said, "but Yashodabai and I now think that it could serve a better cause if you will kindly accept it for the good work you are doing."

Professor Karve saw the light that brightened the faces of the two. His heart was full and he could not utter a word. In their kindness he found new strength to carry on the work he had just undertaken. At the moment, and because of the piety which had prompted the gift, its value was infinitely greater than the number of coins it contained.

During the Diwali holidays in 1903, Professor Karve had two unexpected visitors. One of them was Mr. Sitaram Narayan Pandit of Rajkot. Professor Karve had met him once at one of the sessions of the Social Conference. Having heard of Mr. Pandit's generosity, he had sought a few minutes to tell him about the Ashram. He invited Mr. Pandit to visit the Ashram, but he did not think Mr. Pandit would remember the invitation a few hours after it was extended. The visit therefore was a very pleasant surprise. The other person was Mr. Pandit's nephew, Mr. Narayan Bhaskar Pandit, whom Mr. Karve knew.

A few days after the visit, Mr. Karve received a cheque of three hundred rupees from Mr. Sitaram Narayan Pandit.

In the letter which accompanied the cheque, the donor took care to ask Mr. Karve to let him know whenever he was in need or in difficulty.

He soon found that Mr. Pandit was not a man who would wait until a needy man went to him for help. An institution like the Anath Balikashram would, he knew, always be in need of help for the expansion of its activities as well as for its routine work. He did not allow many days to pass before he sent another amount of fifty rupees saying that he wished to send the same amount every month. When, in 1904, the plan for the new building was finalised, Mr. Pandit sent a donation of a thousand rupees. With a heart overflowing with gratitude, Mr. Karve wrote to thank Mr. Pandit. In the reply he had, it was written:

"It is you who deserve my warm and grateful thanks for giving me this excellent opportunity to spend my money well."

In 1904, the annual session of the Indian Social Conference was held in Bombay. By this time, Parvatibai Athavale's work for the Balikashram, and particularly her collection tours, had established her reputation as a social worker. She was asked to address the Conference and she was glad to have the opportunity. For a long time she had felt very strongly about certain western fashions and modes of behaviour which a large number of gentlemen and ladies had accepted and spread under the garb of reform. Her views were quite definite and clear. With an uncommon boldness that astounded the large gathering of educated men and women who called themselves reformers, she told them to beware of blind and thoughtless adoption of western customs which, she warned them, were doing the Indian Society incalculable harm. All that was needed, she added, was a cautious and careful adaptation of the western customs and habits cutting out all that lacked decency and was foreign to our own culture.

Mrs. Athavale's speech created a wild sensation. There were many who regarded it as a personal affront. The students and young men and women who were present wildly cheered her and even before she sat down started making

collections on her behalf for the institution.

With his natural disposition not to hurt any one and to avoid harsh words even though they conveyed the truth, Professor Karve was pained and could not help feeling that Parvatibai should have spoken with more tact and restraint. The effects of Parvatibai's onslaught against what she called the mistaken notions of reform and the growing tendency to ape western ways lingered for a long time. The newspapers violently attacked her and Professor Karve received representations from well-wishers calling upon him to remove Parvatibai from the position she held in the Ashram, Professor Karve knew how to deal with representations and criticism of this kind. He gave everybody an assurance that the matter would be carefully considered by those who conducted the Ashram.

A Gujarati well-wisher of the Balikashram offered a donation of two thousand and five hundred rupees. The conditions he suggested were that the amount should be spent on the construction of a small temple and of a hospital for infectious diseases like plague. There would be no difficulty in having or maintaining a hospital. The idea of the temple was a good one in itself, but its maintenance was not an easy matter. Most of the inmates of the Ashram were widows who had not kept their hair. According to tradition, the water or other articles of worship touched by the hands of such widows would be considered impure for the worship. Professor Karve therefore politely suggested that there may be some modification. Mr. N. T. Vaidya who acted as the intermediary told Professor Karve that the donor would accept the modification. After some time, however, the donor suddenly changed his mind and withdrew the offer for reasons which were not disclosed. The orthodox press, however, found in the withdrawal sufficient cause to attack the institution which, it was their belief and argument, was doing harm to religion.

As the work of the Balikashram grew and became from day to day more complicated and strenuous, Professor Karve began to think of devoting all his time and attention to it. He therefore asked the Deccan Education Society of which he was a life member to allow him to retire. Instead of

accepting his plea, the Society gave him the alternative to go on long leave. Leave for three years without pay was sanctioned. From the beginning of 1904, he began to give all his time to the development of the Ashram. In less than a year, however, he found it unnecessary to be away from the College. Parvatibai and two other women workers had taken up the work of the Ashram by then. While Parvatibai took up the work of making collections, the other two, Kashibai Deodhar and Venubai Namjoshi, stayed at the Ashram and supervised its working in all its departments. It was these three life workers who did most of the spade work and thereby laid the solid foundation of the Ashram.

Kashibai Deodhar joined the Ashram as a life worker in 1904, but her connection with the institution was much older. She was one of those who helped in its management in the early days when it had no house of its own. She was a child-widow and had spent her early years of widowhood in the Sharada Sadan. Another widow who had her early training at the Sharada Sadan and later joined Professor Karve's Balikashram was Venubai Namjoshi whose home was Amaraoti. Her cousin, Principal G. G. Agarkar of the Fergusson College, brought her to Poona and to the Sharada Sadan and gave her all the comfort and encouragement she needed in those difficult days. Both Mrs. Deodhar and Mrs. Namjoshi did the administrative work and served as Lady Superintendents of the Ashram.

At no time in its history, did the institution founded by Annasaheb Karve feel the want of women workers. He has been able to realise his ideal of having institutions for the welfare of women managed by themselves. All his earliest colleagues and helpmates were women. The example of the three pioneer workers was followed by others. Among these was Krishnabai Phalke who did valuable work as store-keeper and supervisor of the kitchen. There were three more to whom the Ashram and its founder are equally grateful for contributing to its early growth. Banutai Deshpande, Anandibai Marathe and Durgabai Kirloskar have left their mark on the history of the Ashram and on the grateful memory of Anna, the founder

It was no wonder that those who belonged to the orthodox camp took delight in attacking the Anath Balikashram and its founder whenever they could. One of the worst things they did was to describe the Balikashram as a factory where raw material for the marriage of widows is manufactured. Professor Karve did not think much of such attacks and ridicules. His attitude towards such critics and adversaries was one of wise and cautious indifference. He refrained from giving replies or explanations. But there were a few rare occasions when he found it necessary to make his position clear. The 'Chikitsak', a newspaper from Belgaum, published a letter signed by 'Punarvivahit' on August 16, 1905. Ever since the Anath Balikashram was founded and its attitude of neutrality towards the subject of the marriage of widows became sufficiently known, Professor Karve became the object of criticism of a few reformers also. It was argued by them that the very act of founding the Ashram was a reactionary step inasmuch as its founder had given up the work he had been doing to popularise the cause of the marriage of widows. It was Professor Karve's conviction that the Ashram would thrive only if its activities were not allowed to be mixed up even remotely with the subject of remarriage. The Balikashram was founded for nothing more and nothing less than the specific object of providing educational facilities for widows. There was far greater opposition to the remarriage of widows than to their education. The early history of the Sharada Sadan of Pandita Ramabai and that of the campaign he had himself carried on for the Widow Marriage Association had proved this fact beyond doubt. If an effort was made, even indirectly, to encourage the inmates of the Ashram to marry again, considerable harm would be done to its main cause, for there were those who did not mind having their widowed daughters or sisters educated, but they would not have liked to consider the question of getting them married again. The path pursued by Professor Karve was the path of wise caution. He never identified himself with any negotiations or efforts to bring about the marriage of an inmate of the Ashram. If the marriage of an inmate took place even after she left the Ashram, he would not attend it if it was to take place against the wishes of

her parents or other elders.

Some of his best friends who were supporters of the cause of the marriage of widows found it difficult to understand him or, if they did, to agree with him. If the cause was a good one, it must be supported. Professor Karve was one of its earliest supporters. In fact, his was the first marriage of its kind in Poona. That he should give it up in favour of another cause was, according to them, an act of desertion if not of treachery. Some of them even went so far as to allege that Professor Karve now felt sorry for having taken the step and would have retraced it if that was possible.

'Punarvivahit' who wrote in the Chikitsak of Belgaum put forth all these arguments at length and in words which had the sharpness of arrows. He accused Professor Karve of having two consciences or a split conscience.

"Is it your intention, Professor," the writer went on to ask, "that the widows who are admitted to your Ashram should be trained to be teacher or nurses or tailors or some such workers so that they may, in due course, go out into the society to be servants or attendants to their more fortunate sisters who have a home with a husband and children?"

He gave Professor Karve the following challenge:

"If you now consider that the marriage of widows is a sin, you should have the goodness and be bold enough to say so."

His main charge was:

"You behave in a way which gives the impression to the inmates of your Ashram that it is a sin to marry again. Do not your assistants tell them so in so many words?"

The writer lamented the fact that 'he who began with the foundation of the 'Vidhavavivahottejak Mandali' has now descended, step by step, by changing the name of that association to a tamer one, and then by founding the 'Vidhavasadan' for the specific and exclusive purpose of educating the widows.

Perhaps Professor Karve would have connived at the letter which appeared in the Chikitsak, but he could not ignore the repercussions it had. He was particularly pained, to find its echoes in the Sudharak of Poona and the Subodha Patrika

of Bombay. The Sudharak stressed the necessity of administering an effective rebuke to persons like Professor Karve whose advocacy of the attitude of neutrality was, according to it, ununderstandable.

The reply Professor Karve gave to his critics appeared in the Sudharak on April 6, 1906, about eight months after the appearance of 'Punarvivahit's letter in the Chikitsak. It was written with forbearance and restraint.

"In my initial work for the cause of the marriage of widows, I have humbly and earnestly tried to follow the same path which was adopted by Pandit Ishwarchandra Vdiyasagar in Calcutta and Vishnushastri Pandit on our side. Today this work is being ably done by a number of my friends for whom I have the highest respect. I have not, by even so much as a single word or act, done anything to throw obstacles in their path. At the same time, I humbly submit, it is open for anyone to take up the work or the activity which he considers would be most beneficial for the welfare of the society."

Referring to the two movements of the marriage of widows and their education, he wrote:—

"It is my considered and firm opinion that the cause of the education of widows will prosper only if it is kept entirely aloof from the work which is being done for the marriage of widows. The idea of founding a home for widows was first sponsored by the Widow Marriage Association, but after careful consideration it was decided to have the two movements entirely independent of each other."

He humbly admitted that he had to give up the work of the Widow Marriage Association when he took up the work of the Balikashram, but he assured his critics that ultimately the education of widows would be found to be a greater cause than their remarriage.

There was no further correspondence on this subject in the Press, but some years later, in 1911, a patron of the Anath Balikashram called upon the Management of the Ashram to set aside its attitude of neutrality towards the question of the marriage of widows and say clearly whether it supported the cause or opposed it. His letter was considered by the Managing Committee of the Balikashram on June 21, 1911, and the

following resolution was unanimously passed:

"The Hindu Widows' Home is a strictly educational institution and, as such, its attitude towards the question of widow remarriage can only be one of absolute neutrality. The Committee, however, is of the opinion that when it is settled by the guardians of a widow that she should be married, and active steps have begun to be taken, it is desirable, that such guardians should withdraw the girl from the Home in consideration of the disturbing influence which the matter is bound to exercise, on the minds of the other girls in the Home."

The decision taken by Professor Karve and his other colleagues of the Hindu Widows' Home Association was greater and more far-reaching than even they could have imagined. Had the founder of the Ashram stuck to the Widow Marriage Association, he would have perhaps been instrumental in bringing about a few more remarriages. His giving up of that work did not make much difference. On the other hand, the Balikashram which he founded in 1896 proved to be the seed, so small as that of a banyan tree, from which has grown a mighty tree which has sent out its branches far and wide and has become one of the wonders of modern India. Rightly has the founder universally been acclaimed as a Maharshi, a great seer who, in those days of darkness, could peer far into the future and see the vision of a better day not for a handful of widows who could have been persuaded to accept a second marriage but for vast numbers of them who have received the benefits of education and have now acquired independent positions of honour in various spheres.

On the whole, the early history of the Anath Balikashram has been a story of unhampered progress. There were great difficulties to be overcome and Herculean tasks to be accomplished, but for all these, selfless workers came forward in unbroken succession and, above all, Professor Karve himself has been the source of light and comfort for all of them. Professor Karve has narrated a few incidents in his autobiography which he describes as unfortunate. These incidents were few and far between, and have left not a single stain on the fair name of the Ashram.

During the early years of its history, Professor Karve had the honour and pleasure of receiving distinguished visitors —a large number of them. Gandhiji was one of these. Among others were Maharajas and Rajas, Governors and their wives, statesmen and administrators, and social workers. There is, however, one visit which he remembers with greater joy and pride than any other. In 1902, his mother and elder brother Dada, had come to Poona on their way back home from Pandharpur. They did not stay in his house but paid a visit to the Ashram. Tears of joy rolled down the cheeks of both as they saw the good work Dhondu had started and was doing so admirably. These tears gave him the satisfaction that after all he had not lost their goodwill and that his work was worthy of the blessings of the two persons to whom he owed most of what had contributed to his spiritual growth.

That was Dada's first visit to the Ashram but not the last one. Twelve years later, he visited it again. Ambatai was with him this time. Mr. Karve's maternal uncle and aunt, Dr. R. P. Paranjpye's parents, also came to see the Ashram at the same time. To see all four of them in the Ashram and hear words of satisfaction and compliment uttered by them was something which Professor Karve could not easily compare with any other achievement of his life.

12

Daughters Of The Ashram

(i)

"I WAS born in a respectable family. I would do nothing that was likely to lower its prestige or spoil its fair name. I became a widow when I was seventeen. A widow who did not give up her hair was considered a blot on her family. My aunt who lost her husband when she was only ten, had sacrificed her hair and adopted the red saree. After my father's death, my mother also had to yield to the same disfiguring process. What was I to do? If I refused or protested, I would be guilty of an act that would bring dishonour to the family of my birth.

"Since my father's death, my mother with her three children was supported by my uncle, my father's brother. When I was married, my mother found comfort in the thought that the burden on her brother-in-law had become lighter, but that comfort was short-lived. Four days after my husband's death, my uncle came and took me with him back to his house.

"My poor mother had to undergo the cruel transformation on the tenth day after my father's death. I felt certain that that would happen to me also on the tenth day of my widowed life. I thought of my mother and of myself. I remembered how my mother had made a desperate effort to escape the humiliating process, by throwing herself into a well on the night before the tenth day. She was, however, not fortunate. Death was not kind to her. She was pulled out of the well

and the inevitable took place.

"Could I follow my mother's example and seek protection under the wings of death? We were staying near the Dadar railway station. There was a well in the compound. I could seek liberation with the aid of either—the well or the railway line.

"On the tenth day, my mind became overpowered with grief and fear and with the thought of ending them both. I ate nothing on that day and spoke to none. I spent the whole day lying in bed. Night came and my resolve to end my life gathered strength from hour to hour. I could not sleep. My mother who was by my side also was awake. She saw me tossing in my bed.

"What's the matter, Tai? Why are you so restless?" she asked with tenderness in her voice.

"My whole body was wet with perspiration. When my mother found this out, she got up and lighted the lamp. As soon as her eyes fell on my pale face, she knew everything. How could she not? She had herself passed through the same ordeal. She spoke words of comfort and tried to give me courage.

"Nothing happened on the eleventh day or on the twelfth or the thirteenth. My uncle, evidently, had no thought of submitting to tradition. Yes, he was too kind-hearted to entertain any thought of having me disfigured. One day he asked my mother what she thought of the idea of sending me to Professor Karve's Ashram at Hingne. My mother readily gave her consent.

"In a few days, I was at Hingne. A new chapter was opened in my life."

"My mother's relatives did not like the idea. One of them wrote to my uncle:

"Did you think of sending your niece to that place because you found it too expensive to have her in your house? You should have told me and I could have easily given her some job in the hotel I am running."

"My deceased husband's sister requisitioned some one's assistance, to see if I was actually admitted to a house of ill-fame in Poona

"I was grieved to hear that my uncle who had done all this for me had to suffer mean attacks and accusations. How kind he was to me, and how grateful I felt!

"At Hingne, my education was unhampered. Nobody bothered me, and no criticism reached my ears there. Beginning with learning the alphabet, I went from one standard to the higher, till I passed the Matriculation Examination.

"I had now greater confidence and I even thought of joining a college.

"After my education was completed, I joined an educational institution for girls as a worker.

"My poor mother did not live to see these happy days, but my uncle and aunt were still living to see the joy of my success.

"Forty years ago, I was anxious to put an end to my life because I could at that time forsee nothing but himiliation and a life of utter misery. Today I look forward to a life so different—a life of usefulness, and therefore my anxious wish of today is to live for many, many years and do some good work.

"How did this happen? The Ashram of Hingne has enabled me to have this transformation in my life and outlook.

"Like Vishwamitra of old, Maharshi Karve has created this new world for poor, unfortunate widows like me!"

(ii)

Chandra was filled with utter disgust and was furious when she saw a pair of red sarees placed before her by her father. Giving up all considerations of respect, she cried in a terrible voice,

"Tatya, I shall never submit to this humiliation—let me tell you with all the emphasis I can command."

"I warn you, Chandra," Father said in an equally firm voice, "You will be inviting disgrace on my family if you show such obstinacy. This is what our religion has enjoined and you cannot defy religion."

"I don't care for your religion if it is so heartless. If for defying the injunction of that religion I have to go to hell,

I shall do so gladly."

"You may not care for religion and the duties it enjoins, but I can't be so foolish. I have to live as a member of the society and I have to act in accordance with its rules and traditions. Be sensible, my daughter, and do not be a blot on my family!"

"Have I ever disregarded your wishes or disobeyed your orders before this, Tatya?" poor Chandra spoke with entreaty, "Then why do you ask me to do something which will cause me agony every minute of my life? How can I do anything which will turn my future life into one long, endless misery?"

"If you don't want to obey me," Tatya warned her in a desperate tone, "an impudent girl like you can't live any longer in my house. You can choose your own shelter and support in the wide world outside."

That was exactly what Chandra did. She was a widow but that hardly meant that she was different from the other girls of her age. She had a whole life before her which she did not want to sacrifice to the dead, meaningless rules of the *shastras* by giving up her hair and adopting the red saree. These were, she knew, not only marks of humiliation, but also symbols of a life of slavery.

"Tatya, if it is from a father's heart that these words have came, I know what to do. I shall not stay in your house even to touch a drop of water."

Her aunt, her mother's sister, lived in Poona. Chandra decided to go to Poona and seek her help. She left her father's house the next day.

When she arrived in Poona she found that the world was more on the side of her father and his orthodox beliefs than on her own. Her aunt said to her:

"Don't be rash and ruin yourself, my child. Your salvation and your happiness now and hereafter will be in obeying what your father tells you to do."

She asked her to give up her idea of going to Hingne and advised her to return to her father.

There were two or three of her father's friends in Poona. They came to see her. The advice they gave her was not different from what her aunt said

"Misfortune has befallen you and it is but the fruit of your misdeeds of an earlier birth. You can make amends for them only by being an obedient daughter to your father and spend the rest of your life in serving God and religion."

Chandra was a girl of an independent way of thinking. With the whole world against her, she still could not change her mind. She had heard about Hingne. For three or four years she had begged of her father to allow her to go to Hingne, but he had not listened to her. Now she felt certain that in a whole world which showed no sympathy or mercy, that was the only place where she could find hope, encouragement and guidance. Nothing could change her resolve to go to Hingne, not even the advice given by her well-wishers in Poona who told her that Hingne was like a hell for widows who are misled on the path of remarriage by men of evil intentions, and their leader was a Devil of the name of Professor Karve.

One morning Chandra left her aunt's house with the object of going to Hingne alone. It was a little difficult for her to find her way, but she reached her destination.

According to the rules, only widows under eighteen were admitted in the Balikashram at Hingne. Chandra was much older. She did not even know the alphabet. How could she be admitted?

Would she work and do the cooking, if necessary? Chandra was willing to do anything. She was admitted as a free inmate and had to work in the kitchen and the dining hall as an assistant.

With her capacity to do hard work and work of any kind, and with her determination, Chandra soon became a useful member of the establishment and made her mark as a deligent student in the school.

After seven or eight years, Chandra became a trained teacher. There were several openings for her. When her friends suggested to her that she might marry again, she rejected the proposal. She would work and live an independent life. The work she would have liked most was that of conducting a school. She found an opportunity after waiting for nearly a year. The girl who was asked ten years before

to adopt the red garment and a life of servitude, was now the head-mistress of a school in Oglewadi where she found happiness and contentment in teaching the children of the workers and moulding their life and character into useful citizens.

Tai and Chandra whose stories are narrated in the preceding paragraphs are instances of the hundreds of widows who during the last fifty years sought and found shelter and the light of guidance at Hingne. From the heart of the Maharshi who saw the vision of the Anath Balikashram in those far off days of 1895 and 1896, to the hearts of hundreds and thousands of girls came a message of hope and encouragement. The Ashram has done much more than just giving a new turn and shape only to those widows who sought shelter under its kindly roof. From it has gone out a message of hope to countless widows in the country. They may not have gone to the Anath Balikashram of Professor Karve for shelter and education. But they have learnt from the examples of those who came out of the Ashram as workers and as citizens with a new life of their own choice. They discarded old beliefs and old practices and joined schools or training institutions or hospitals to take their honourable places in public life as housewives or teachers or nurses or doctors.

In the early year of the Balikashram when it had yet to convince the public of its objects and its usefulness, three persons representing three generations came to it. They were, a girl of six years, her mother who was just twenty and her young grandmother who had not even crossed forty. The mother and the grandmother were widows. The Balikashram had opportunities to offer to all three of them. After learning to read and write and equipping herself with a little general education, the grandmother took a course in training as a midwife. Later she became a teacher and also began to earn well as a midwife. The mother completed her education into the sixth standard and then qualified herself by taking the teacher's Training Certificate. Later she accepted a proposal for a second marriage. The girl became a B.A. and after her education found a happy home as the wife of an Engineer.

Mr. Vinayak Lakshman Soman, Dhondo Keshav Karve's

old teacher at Murud, was also one of the most unforgettable characters of his early days. He had given him many a first lesson. In 1911, Mr. Soman died and his third wife of thirty-three became a widow. They were living in Poona at the time. Mr. Soman had lived long enough to see not only the Balikashram founded by Mr. Karve but even to work for a time in the Mahila Vidyalaya which was founded later. He had come to Poona at the request of his old student. Mrs. Soman was the mother of four daughters and a son and had also become a grandmother at the time of her husband's death. After the first thirteen days of mourning were over, Professor Karve met Mrs. Soman and spoke to her.

"If it is your wish to follow the old traditional way in which a widow spends her days, I shall have nothing to say. But I would like you to consider a proposal or two about a more useful life, and if you agree, you must begin here and now."

Mrs. Soman had complete confidence in Professor Karve even as her husband had. He offered to give her whatever help she needed. She took some days to decide and then made up her mind. Professor Karve spent two hours every day in teaching her and found in her an intelligent student. She showed quicker progress than he had expected. After three months, he asked her to join the Ashram where it would be easier for her to attend to her studies. By this time, she had learnt to look upon whatever was proposed by Professor Karve as beneficial for her and for her children. Leaving the children to her sister's care in Poona, Mrs. Soman went to Hingne. The first hour or two in the morning were set apart by Professor Karve for her studies. She passed the Vernacular Final (the Primary School Leaving Certificate as it is now called) Examination and then took a job in the primary school in the Ashram itself.

Mrs. Soman's two daughters were married during her husband's life-time and at an early age. Now she made up her mind not to repeat the mistake but to allow the third and fourth daughters to grow to an age mature enough before getting married. This was the result of the influence which the atmosphere of the Ashram had on her and, more than

that it was the result of what she learnt from Professor Karve himself.

Mrs. Varubai Shevade, a life-worker of the Anath Balikashram, from whose *Ashram Kanyaka,* a collection of true stories, the two episodes of Tai and Chandra have been taken, says in the foreward of her book:

"Maharshi Dhondo Keshav Karve founded the Anath Balikashram at Hingne with the object of giving helpless widows education and making them self-reliant. During the last fifty years, hundreds of women have received the benefits of education in the Ashram and have learnt to stand on their own legs. A number of them have married and many others have entered public life and made a name for themselves in its various spheres—social, political, educational etc.

"It is not the annual reports of an institution that give an adequate idea of its real work. The later lives of those who came to the Ashram for shelter and guidance and left it fully equipped with educational and other qualifications can give this idea as nothing else can."

Stories of such lives are so many and varied that it is difficult to recount them, but every one of them is a monument in itself, with something unique in each, to the work which Professor Karve began single-handed and has accomplished.

Equally monumental is the work of those men and women who came forward to assist the founder of the Balikashram in his efforts. It is a fact, and not for a minute can Maharshi Karve allow it to pass from his grateful thoughts, that but for their co-operation, zeal and labour, the Ashram would not have grown as it did during the last sixty years. Professor Karve has devoted an exclusive chapter of his *"Atma Vritta"* to say how much the Ashram owes to its life-workers. The galaxy is headed by that woman of uncommon strength and will, Parvatibai Athavale, who was the mainstay of the Ashram for full fifty years. Her greatest contribution to the Ashram is, however, her own son, Professor Narayan Mahadev Athavale, another lifeworker of the Ashram. Following his noble mother's nobler example of selfless labour of love, Professor Athavale gave a crowning effect to his own

life-long contribution by making an announcement on the occasion of the Ashram's completion of sixty years in 1956 to hand over a substantial portion of his savings—more than a lakh of rupees—to the Ashram. Others, not so rich in money, but with richer treasures of devotion and sacrifice have assisted in the work of making collections or adding to the usefulness of the Ashram. Among these are Hari Ramchandra Divekar who gave up a more lucrative post at Allahabad to serve the Ashram; Gopal Mahadev Chiplunkar, the founder of the Bhaubeej Fund, whose early death was a great loss; Vaman Malhar Joshi, the well-known thinker and author; Kamalabai Deshpande, Varubai Shevade, Seetabai Annigiri, Narayan Mahadev Patwardhan, Vishwanath Abaji Modak, Banubai Aho, Ramchandra Hari Kelkar and Gangubai Tambole. The life and work of everyone of these workers have been the pillars of the Ashram. Every one of them has derived inspiration to do the great things he or she has done for the Ashram from the indefatigable founder of the Ashram, their beloved and revered Anna. To serve him and the Ashram founded by him adequately they would find a hundred lives insufficient.

13

The Mahila Vidyalaya

AS the Ashram was growing and was becoming more stable, its founder was reaching the age of fifty. Professor Karve had enough work as the life-worker of the Deccan Education Society and as the director of the Ashram to keep him busy during all his waking hours. As his work in the Ashram grew, he began to wonder whether, as a consequence, his work at the college was being neglected. He did not worry about what others thought of it, but he was anxious that he should be able to return in full what he was receiving from the Deccan Education Society. If he did not, he had no right to continue as an active member. The Ashram was demanding more and more of his attention and energies. Did that not mean that it was not possible for him to do justice to the responsibilities he owed to the Society? The idea of retiring from the Society began to enter his mind. He spoke to Baya but she would not listen to him.

"You have your sons whose future you have to take care of." She said, "How will you be able to manage if you retire before completing twenty years? You won't be entitled to the pension if you retire now. You may not need the pension for your own needs, but I need it for the education of my three sons. You don't expect the Ashram to look after your wife and children. It is not proper for you to neglect your family even for the sake of the Ashram."

When he spoke to the other members of the Society, they refused to allow him to retire. They had given him in 1904 the

alternative of taking their three years' leave.

All these years Baya had been able to relieve her husband of most of the worry and anxiety of rearing the family. There were occasions when she felt sad, and at times was angry, to think of his indifference towards his sons. Sometimes the boys came home from school sad and a little excited over what must have happened at the school. They complained to their mother that they did not have fine clothes to wear or were not able to play games or enjoy the amusements as other boys did. Why did they have none of these good things? Baya's heart was grieved to hear them but she gave them comfort by asking them to think of the poorer boys and remembering how much better their own lot was than that of those boys.

"It isn't clothes or luxuries that make a person great." Baya said to console them. "Your father does not earn a very good income, but he does a lot of good work. He wants you to complete your education before you are twenty. When you grow, and when you begin to earn, you will be able to enjoy better things than you do now".

Because Baya looked after the home and the children, Professor Karve was able to work with greater intensity and to have room in his mind not only for thoughts of the progress of the Ashram but also for fresh proposals for widening the scope of the mission he had undertaken.

The Anath Balikashram was founded primarily for the benefit of the widows. It had, however, become necessary for the Management to admit unmarried girls also. In 1899, a gentleman from Ratnagiri wrote to Professor Karve asking him if he could admit his three daughters of the ages 14, 12 and 10. He wrote:

"The eldest is a widow. If I send her alone to the Ashram, it would be difficult for me to get suitable husbands for the others soon, and then they would have to remain idle at home. I know I shall not be able to pay adequately for the boarding, lodging and education of all three of them, but I do want to see that they are educated. Please advise me in the matter."

Professor Karve's curiosity was roused. He went to see

the gentleman and his daughters and was pleased to find that all three of them were intelligent and full of promise. He at once decided to admit them on one condition. He told their father that he should not consider any proposal about their marriage till they were eighteen. The condition was readily accepted, and in the beginning of 1900, the two younger girls accompanied their eldest sister who was a widow and were admitted to the Ashram.

This was the beginning, and in the years which followed, the number of students who were not widows steadily increased. In 1900 it was two, and at the end of 1906 it had risen to nineteen in a total of seventy-five. The Management of the Ashram had then to make a rule that the number of unmarried girls or those who were not widows should not exceed one fourth of the total number of the inmates.

This decision was in conformity with the purpose with which the Ashram was founded. Professor Karve could raise no objection. Still it made him sad to think of the fairly large number of applications from non-widows which had to be rejected. Each application so rejected, he thought, meant the denial of an opportunity to a girl who wished to have education and to live a better life. The times were changing and more and more girls were coming out of the narrow surroundings of their homes to seek the benefits of education. There was the Girls' School at Huzurpaga and there was also the Female Training College, but the number of girls who wished to learn was greater than these institutions could admit. Besides, the public had now learnt to look at the educational work of the Balikashram with greater appreciation. The education given in this institution was not only less expensive but, as many thought, was also of a higher quality and of a more useful type.

The constitution of the Anath Balikashram had in it a provision for the admission of unmarried girls and those whose husbands were living if it did not come in the way of serving the main object of giving educational facilities to widows.

Professor Karve gave his anxious thought to all these circumstances and facts for many days. As a result, he felt

with increasing insistence that the Anath Balikashram should have a sister institution where provision for the lodging and boarding of girls and married women who were not widows could be separately made. It was not necessary to make additional provision for their education as they could be admitted to the School which the Ashram was running.

In a letter dated January 31, 1907, which he circulated among the members of the Managing Committee of the Balikashram, Professor Karve explained his views and proposals in detail and clearly pointed out that the new venture, if undertaken, would in no way hamper the growth and progress of the Balikashram. On the contrary, as he explained at length, the new institution would yield a good many advantages to the older one. One of the main advantages would be that the Ashram would command greater sympathy from the public if not only widows but other girls and women also were able to receive the benefits of education under its roof.

Anticipating that there might be a reluctance in the minds of the members of the Managing Committee about undertaking an additional financial burden, Professor Karve offered to shoulder it himself.

The proposals contained in the circular letter were considered at a meeting of the Committee held on February 6, and after a long discussion it was resolved that as the proposal did not fall within the purview of the objects of the Ashram, it should not be accepted. It, however, suggested that Professor Karve himself might start an independent and separate institution for the purpose, if he so wished.

The Committee's decision filled Professor Karve's heart with great disappointment, but he could not blame its members for taking it. They had the interests of the Ashram at heart. In taking the decision, they were actuated by those interests and their responsibility to guard them. At the same time, he felt that the opportunity to serve the cause of reform which the circumstances presented was too precious to be missed. He was not to be held back. He welcomed the Committee's decision as a call and as a challenge. Did the decision not mean that if he wished to move forward, he should do it alone? It did, and he meant to go forward

alone.

On March 14, 1908, the Times of India published an article from an Englishman, Major Hunter Steen. One of the sentences in the article read as follows:—

"In a small house in Narayan Peth, Poona City, not far from Lakdi Pool, is to be found the tiny beginning, at least on this side of India, of what will one day prove the social regeneration of the country."

In these prophetic words, Major Hunter Steen described the Mahila Vidyalaya, founded by Dhondo Keshav Karve, which, at that time was just a year old.

On Ranga Panchami day, which was the fourth of March, in 1907, a humble beginning was made with six women students. The Deccan Education Society was gracious enough to allow Professor Karve to use for the Vidyalaya their old but spacious wada near Lakdi Bridge. Three of the six girls belonged to the Ashram.

A little earlier, Professor Karve had a scheme prepared for the purpose of giving encouragement to girls to remain unmarried until they reached the age of twenty. He was able to have the cooperation and support of a generous friend. The kind-hearted gentleman promised to send a monthly contribution of twenty-five rupees and continued to send it for more than seven years. This scheme became known as the Brahmacharya Fund. The monthly subsidy of twenty-five rupees enabled Professor Karve to help three women students in the Ashram. The first three students of the Vidyalaya were the 'Brahmacharya' scholars. As the donor had not laid down a condition that the Brahmacharya Fund Scholars must be inmates of the Ashram, and as he had offered his help to Professor Karve himself and not to the Management of the Ashram, it was diverted to the new venture, the Mahila Vidyalaya, and the three Scholars were transferred to it. The other three were daughters of two of Professor Karve's friends who were convinced that whatever he did was right.

Among those who came forward to do teaching in the Vidyalaya was Mr. V. L. Soman, Professor Karve's old teacher. Narmadabai, Radhabai's sister, once again offered her services to the Vidyalaya and she took up the management

of the kitchen and other household work.

In the first annual report it was stated that the Mahila Vidyalaya was a bold venture, but the founder expressed his faith in the support of his friends and in his own efforts which he believed would enable him to meet difficulties.

No venture conceived and undertaken with a selfless motives fails to attract the sympathy of kind-hearted people. A lady from Bombay heard of the new institution. She knew it was in need of help. She made a collection of food-grains. This collection was known as the Mushti Fund. Going from door to door, the lady collected a good quantity of rice. She sent to Professor Karve the money she got by selling the rice, supplementing the amount with a few small donations. The amount Professor Karve received from the lady was seven rupees and four annas. He accepted it with gratitude. The actual addition it made to the resources of the Vidyalaya was small and limited, but the delight and inspiration which the lady's earnestness gave him were unlimited.

Good causes, like good men, have the capacity to draw towards them, as the magnet draws iron both bright and rusty, criticism and condemnation as well as praise and applause.

Not a few persons understood and appreciated Professor Karve's new project. They looked upon it as a much-needed measure to discourage early marriages and to encourage girls to spend their time usefully before getting married at a mature age. They did not think that the Mahila Vidyalaya was entering the field of the education of girls for unhealthy competition. In their opinion, more institutions like the Girls' High School at Huzurpaga were needed and that the Mahila Vidyalaya was by no means a rival institution.

There were others who looked at the Mahila Vidyalaya with a different eye. A friend who was not altogether unsympathetic wrote to Professor Karve:

"When there is already in Poona a High School for girls with boarding arrangements added, the necessity of starting another Home for unmarried girls near the same town is not apparent. It would be a competition to the Girls' High School."

It was neither necessary nor useful to argue with those

who held this point of view. After some time, not only the gentleman's views were changed but he even came forward to give financial help to the Mahila Vidyalaya.

A gentleman who had a decent income had six daughters and no son. It was not difficult for him to meet the expenses of his large family. But how was he to find the money to get all his six daughters married? When he heard about the Mahila Vidyalaya of Professor Karve, he had an idea. If he had six sons, he would have given them education, and he would not have had to bother about getting them married. Why should he not give his daughters the same opportunity to get the benefits of education? They could be as self-reliant as young men. He therefore decided to treat his daughters like sons and not to worry about their marriages. He made a beginning by sending his eldest daughter with her aunt, who was a widow, to the Balikashram. The following year another daughter was sent, and two more came after eighteen months. An aunt and eight nieces—not six, as two more were born later—came and received the benefits of education the Vidyalaya was able to give. These benefits were so precious and so helpful in their later lives that it was no longer necessary for anyone of them to think of marriage as the only goal of a woman's aspirations.

It was not always necessary for Professor Karve to go out with the begging bowl. Well wishers, friends and admirers came forward in large numbers to support his cause. Every time he received a message of appreciation or a contribution in cash, his heart's gratitude went out to the kind-hearted person.

Just a month after the Vidyalaya was started, a friend, Major Krishnaji Vishnu Kukde, collected four hundred rupees for the Vidyalaya, and a few months later sent two hundred more.

About the same time, he had a letter from a widow. Mrs. Gangabai Gokhale wrote:

"In the Dnyan Prakash, I read an account of your Mahila Vidyalaya. I had also an eye-witness's account from my nephew who has seen your new institution and its work. I deem it my duty to help a cause like this. The Brahmachary-

ashram which you are conducting is striving to remove the causes of the misfortune which befell me—early widowhood. It is a praise-worthy effort. It is, therefore, my wish to give a monthly scholarship of five rupees in the name of my beloved husband to one of the girls in your Vidyalaya. I would like the scholarship to be named "Vishwanath Sadashiv Gokhale Scholarship." I shall before long make a permanent endowment and, till then, shall send you sixty rupees annually in advance."

From Dr. T. C. Khandwala of Bombay came a monthly contribution of ten rupees for the Brahmacharya Fund.

When the scheme of a building was undertaken in 1911, the N. M. Wadia Charities offered to donate a third of the total estimated expenditure of twenty-five thousand rupees.

In the resolution which the trustees of the N. M. Wadia Charities passed, the name of the institution was stated as the "Mahila Vidyalaya, Poona, (Girl-Widow School)". The cheque was already received and it could have been credited to the funds of the Mahila Vidyalaya, but Professor Karve would not allow any uncertainty to remain. He would return the cheque if the donation was offered for the Ashram, and ask the trustees to cancel it and send another for the Ashram. He therefore met Mr. H. A. Wadia, one of the trustees, at his house in Kirkee and had the matter clarified. Mr. Wadia told him that the words "Girl-Widow School" were added by mistake. The cheque was cashed two months after it was received.

The Servants of India Society was founded in 1905 by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Mr. Karve's contemporary at the Elphinstone College, and later his colleague in the Fergusson College. A group of workers, following the example and adopting the ideals of Mr. Gokhale himself, dedicated their lives for the service of India. Mr. Gokhale was among the first who offered their congratulations to Professor Karve on his undertaking the new venture of the Vidyalaya. When Mr. Karve lost a large sum of money in a bank crash he remembered Mr. Gokhale and the interest he had shown in his new venture and went to him for help and advice. Mr. Gokhale readily handed over to him as a loan a sum of five thousand rupees which he could spare from the

balance of the Servants of India Society.

It was not always easy for Professor Karve to express adequately what he felt towards his friends and patrons. Whenever he thought of them, as he did particularly when he wrote the annual report of the Mahila Vidyalaya for 1912, he remembered the difficult times he had to pass through and the relief their spontaneous help had given him on many occasions.

In December of 1911, the Mahila Vidyalaya which, till then, functioned only as a hostel, was transformed into a full-fledged residential school with a house of its own at Hingne next to the building of the Anath Balikashram. Thus was the second dream of Dhondo Keshav Karve realised.

By his words, and more by his deeds, Dhondo Keshav Karve was exerting an influence on the minds of those who worked with him. Among these there is none who felt the influence more keenly than Parvatibai Athavale. Yet, she had a will and a judgment of her own and independently exercised them on most of the things she did. Anna had been instrumental in giving a new shape to her life and, had it not been for his advice and persuasion, she would have spent her life in a remote place like Deorukh in her father's house. She felt grateful to him for giving her an honourable place in life and in his institution. She was even more grateful to him for the opportunities her son, Nana, was having in getting good education and a career suitable for his high intellectual abilities. Yet, she would not accept Anna's opinions in every respect. If they did not conform to her will and judgment, she did not hesitate to express her disapproval.

When in the early years of the Balikashram one of the widows took the bold step of having her hair grown, Parvatibai was furious. In those days she regarded it as a sinful act, as she then looked upon the custom as a sacred injunction prescribed by religion. Besides, she felt that the step which the girl had taken would have an undesirable effect on public opinion which would be decidedly harmful to the Ashram. She fought tooth and nail against the introduction of this reform in the Ashram for nearly ten years as she was anxious to see that no harm was done to the Ashram and its growth

was in no way hampered.

Gradually, however, her views changed. As she gave more and more thought to the subject, it became clear to her that it was not proper to force a widow to have her hair removed. She continued, however, to regard the practice itself as a holy one and was opposed to any effort to prevent a widow from adopting the mendicant's garb if she was desirous of adopting it.

About the change that gradually was coming over her way of thinking and over her outlook, Parvatibai wrote in the story of her life:

"My life in Poona was like a rebirth. A child is born without any knowledge of the world but each new day in its life enlarges the sphere of its knowledge and experience. The education I had gave me a new birth. Everything that came to me was new and I imbibed it. There was a widening of my field of knowledge and my old ideas began to recede into non-existence yielding place to new and liberal ones. I did not, however, allow myself to be carried entirely by the wave of reform. There were certain old beliefs and ways of living which I could never give up, because I did not regard everything that was old as useless and meaningless. Even today, I regard many old beliefs and traditions as the best ones.

"Ever since I came to Poona, I have Anna's example constantly before my eyes. It has enabled me to steer clear of certain fantastic ideas of individual freedom and equality."

There was another and a personal factor which compelled Parvatibai to stick to the old custom of the shaven head. She knew very well that there would be a wild sensation if she ever took the step of giving up those outward marks of widowhood. She was not prepared to face public criticism and condemnation. She did not worry about herself but it was for the sake of her son, who was still in his teens. She would avoid everything that was likely to give him the impression that his mother was guilty of transgressing what was ordained by religion. As years rolled on, she began to feel assured that any act of reform on her part would not adversely affect the reputation of the Ashram on account of the changing times. But she waited till Nana was old enough to think for him-

self and understand things.

In those days, Professor Karve's progressive and liberal outlook was unconsciously exerting itself on the dynamic mind of his sister-in-law.

In 1912, Parvatibai took the decision when Nana was twenty-four years old.

"Anna, I have decided to have my hair grown again." Parvatibai told Professor Karve, "but I would do it only if I have your approval."

"I am so glad to hear about your decision." Anna replied. "You have my blessings."

"There is one point which I must take into consideration before I decide." As Parvatibai spoke, her voice became grave. "If there is the least possibility of my action having an adverse effect on the Ashram, I shall refrain from taking the step so long as I am associated with its work."

Parvatibai's fears were not altogether groundless. Anna knew it. But he saw deeper into things than most others. There would be a storm but it would not last long and would not seriously affect the reputation of the Ashram or its working. He advised Parvatibai to take the step she had decided to take.

At forty, she discarded the vow of the mendicant widow.

"Why has Parvatibai begun to grow her hair now?" the people began to ask one another.

"She has been doing the work of the Ashram all these years and her outward appearance was hardly a handicap. Surely it couldn't be for the sake of the Ashram that she has now thought of a change." Someone remarked.

"Oh no! Surely there is some other motive." was the reply.

Those who thought they were more bold went to Professor Karve and asked him.

"Mr. Karve, why has Parvatibai started wearing her hair again? Has she any personal object in view?"

"Not that I know of," Professor Karve calmly replied, "but if she has any, you will know it."

14

A Vision And A Dream

IS it only the head that wears the crown that lies uneasy? Professor Karve wore no crown on his head. If he had any, it was a crown of thorns, but the thorns did not make his head uneasy.

The Ashram and the Vidyalaya were doing good work, but there was restlessness in the mind of the founder. It was yearning for something else.

In giving stability to these institutions, he had to work hard and collect funds, but he knew financial help was not enough. For many years, it had become his conviction that for the progress and prosperity of a good cause, the most essential factor was man-power. Paid workers could be found in plenty, and if a person was paid well, he could even be expected to do the work efficiently. Efficiency was certainly an important factor but greater than efficiency was devotion. The Hon'ble Mr. G. K. Gokhale had founded the Servants of India Society on the basis of sacrifice and devotion. The Deccan Education Society of which Mr. Karve himself was a life-worker, was another organisation which owed its foundation and its steady growth to the self-less zeal of its founders and life-workers. Before he came to Poona, Mr. Karve was for several years connected with the Cathedral Girls' High School, and he knew that it was conducted by persons whose paramount object was to serve. He had great admiration not only for the workers of these institutions but also for the ideal and the principles on which they were founded. He pondered

on what he had seen. It became clear to him that the devotion of the workers who toiled for the progress of those institutions was not different from the devotion with which a devotee worships his God.

One of the striking features of the building up of a new India during the nineteenth century was the work of the Christian Missionaries. Professor Karve had great respect for them and their work. Although their primary object was the spread of Christianity, the work they had done in the spheres of education and medical relief had, according to him, been a shining example to the Indians.

For the spread of education which was one of the most important nation-building activities, hundreds of workers were needed. Such workers should regard, Professor Karve felt, service to fellow-men as service to God. The idea that the service of one's fellowmen was what God liked most was, he thought, foreign to the Indians. Unless men and women working in the field of education were inspired by this consciousness and unless they took up the work in a worshipful spirit, no abiding progress was possible. These thoughts made Mr. Karve's head uneasy and his heart restless.

They were not new or of recent occurrence. In the Memorandum of Association of the Hindu Widows' Home Association which was registered on the 18th of September 1898, the following was included as one of the objects of the Anath Balikashram:

"To create and maintain a class of Hindu Sisters of Charity and Mercy."

The idea dearest to Professor Karve's mind was the formation of a body of workers whose mission in life was selfless service. He had given expression to this idea in a statement which he had prepared and circulated in 1902:

"Although the Ashram has been founded with the object of enabling widows to have education and to acquire a good moral foundation for their lives and character, that is not the only object. The purpose with which the Ashram was founded and is being conducted will be fulfilled only if it is able to send out into the world workers who would take up the cause of social service without any expectation of material benefit."

It became his wish to spiritualize social work as Mr. Gokhale had spiritualized political work.

His mind was particularly fascinated by the word "mission" and all that it suggested and meant. He searched for a similar word in Sanskrit or Marathi. The word 'math' came to him after some mental effort. It contained the idea of an institution or of an order founded for service—the idea which was to be founded in the word 'mission'.

The essence of the teaching of the Bhagavadgeeta was 'Nishkam Karma' (work without the desire of fruit). No service would be true service if it was rendered with the expectation of some return or of profit. Therefore, a Math must have as its underlying principle—the rock on which it was to be founded—the idea of 'Nishkam Karma'—selfless work. After ten years of ceaseless mental effort, Professor Karve took the decision to found an order of disinterested workers to be named the 'Nishkam Karma Math'.

A few months after he had completed fifty years of his life, on November 4, 1908, Professor Karve and two others met in Bombay in the Seva Sadan to take the vows of the Nishkam Karma Math. The vow they took was:

"I renounce all claim and right to what I have called my own.

"I will from this moment belong to the Math."

"I will willingly accept whatever provision the Math will hereafter make for me and for my family."

The two persons who joined Mr. Karve were Mr. N. M. Athavale who was a college student and a lady who was a widow and also was a student at the time. The name given to the order at the time was 'The Indian Ladies' Mission.'

Although the foundation of the Nishkam Karma Math was laid on that day, actual work was not started. All that Professor Karve did for some time was to keep the light he had kindled burning.

He selected a few widows who were inmates of the Ashram and talked to them about the Nishkam Karma Math, its ideals and the programme of activities and the ways of working which he had in view. They met in the quiet hours of the evening on the top of a neighbouring hill. As Anna

spoke and expounded the ideals of the Math, the girls felt inspired. They did not understand much of what he said but they were filled with inspiration. The Math was started by Anna. He was asking them to join it. That was enough for them. They heard the call and resolved to dedicate their lives as workers of the Nishkam Karma Math.

The group now consisted of four men and fourteen women. It included Mr. Balaji Vinayak Kowlagekar and his wife and Mr. and Mrs. Mahadev Keshav Gadgil.

On December 6, 1910, the first meeting of the workers of the Math was held. Mr. and Mrs. Kowlagekar and Mr. and Mrs. Gadgil were enrolled as the first four workers.

Mr. N. M. Athavale who joined them soon was one of the two who had taken the Math's vow with Professor Karve in 1908. He came to Poona for his education when he was eight years old. Since then he had been under Anna's kindly and watchful eye. From an early age, Nana Athavale had imbibed the ideals of service which he saw translated into Anna's life and activities. When he took the vow, he had not before his eyes the whole picture of the Math's ideals and its programme, but he knew that the idea was good.

Mrs. Deodhar and Mrs. Namjoshi, two of the three ladies who had joined the Widows' Home soon after it was founded by Professor Karve, did not approve of the new activity. They had opposed the proposal of the Mahila Vidyalaya when it was first taken up. Now they felt that Professor Karve was doing a disservice to the Widows' Home by including some of its inmates to join the Math. Their resentment and opposition increased as the Math began to function.

Professor Karve wanted to have only women workers or *sevikas* for the Math. But it was not possible to enlist women immediately as workers. Mr. Gadgil and Mr. Kowlagekar were working as teachers in the Widows' Home at the time. It was for this reason that it was decided to admit them as workers.

The immediate objective before the members of the Math was to train workers for the Widows' Home and the Mahila Vidyalaya. Mr. Athavale and eight of the workers who were women were still studying and they were expected to dedicate

their services to the Math as soon as they completed their studies.

Ever since he gave concrete shape to his dream of the Math, Professor Karve strove hard to impress on the minds of those who willingly came forward to join it that the membership of the Math was a great and sacred responsibility. Unless they were prepared to live a life of austerity and simplicity, it would not be possible for them to render real service to the Math and, through it, to society. He prepared the constitution of the Math with great care and foresight.

One feature of the life of austerity and simplicity which was prescribed for the Math worker was that he should be content with the food he got by begging—*Bhiksha* as the measure was called. Two women volunteers came forward to collect rice and other foodstuffs by begging, which they did once a week. Mrs. Gopikabai Lele and Mrs. Radhabai Malwankar did the work with devotion and they were joined by Anandibai Karve.

The Nishkam Karma Math was, indeed, a lofty ideal. It was not, as some of Professor Karve's critics said, an impracticable one. Mr. Gokhale did not find it difficult to enlist the active co-operation and life-long services of devoted workers for his Servants of India Society. The Christian Mission found hundreds of workers to conduct their manifold activities. But the Nishkam Karma Math of Professor Karve did not go much beyond the preliminary spade-work. The constitution was drafted and the founder-members were eagerly waiting for volunteers of the right type to come and join the Math. For a fairly long time they had to remain satisfied with keeping up their own enthusiasm. Perhaps Professor Karve was not able to chalk out a regular programme of activities for the Math. It is true that the workers of the Math were expected to take up the work of the Ashram and the Vidyalaya. If, as it was stated, the Math was expected to train workers for the Ashram, what programme of training did it have? As he has confessed in his autobiography, Professor Karve felt diffident about his own capacity as far as the work of the Math was concerned. Before the Math was able to produce any tangible results, its promoters

had to face a violent storm of criticism and ultimately were forced to merge the Math into the Ashram itself.

Most people found it difficult to appreciate the aim which Professor Karve had in view in founding the Nishkam Karma Math. Even those who were actually connected with the working of the Ashram expressed their grave doubts regarding the usefulness of the Math, and Professor Karve found them among his bitterest opponents. The Indu Prakash of Bombay published a number of articles on the subject in August 1913 and presented in minute detail the views of those who found it impossible to see any praiseworthy elements in the constitution of the Math.

The first article was written by "a trusted and esteemed friend" "on whose information and judgment" the editor of the Indu Prakash could "place implicit reliance" and "whose disinterested friendship for the cause" the editor "can confidently vouchsafe". Adopting the title "A knotty problem" for the article, the writer stated:

"In part common and analogous, but in part conflicting and divergent as the object of these three institutions (the Ashram, the Vidyalaya and the Math) are, those of the Math in particular being of a very debatable character, their working under the common direction and supervision of Professor Karve and in close proximity with each other, has produced difficulties and complications of a serious character."

It was feared that the Widows' Home no longer had the single-minded zealous devotion of its founder as the new institutions, the Vidyalaya and the Math, were engaging most of his affections and energies.

On February 4, 1913, the Anath Balikashram suffered a grievous loss on account of the resignation of Kashibai Deodhar who had served it as Lady Superintendent for many years with great ability and distinction. Mrs. Deodhar was one of the first three women workers of the Ashram. It was stated that certain differences with the Management had made it necessary for her to sever her connection with the Ashram. Commenting on this subject, the writer of the article in the Indu Prakash said:

"Till recently there were three such Lady Life-Members

of the Home, two of whom being also bracketed with Professor Karve as co-secretaries. Out of this dishearteningly small number of three Life-Members, one, Mrs. Kashibai Deodhar, who was doing duty as co-Secretary and Lady Superintendent of the Home has, to a large extent on account of the new developments, recently left the institution for good."

The new developments were evidently those which arose as a result of the foundation of the two new institutions.

It was painful for the writer to have to say that the work of the Ashram suffered "under the present grievous circumstances" and because, as he went on to remark, "Professor Karve's energies and affections are now almost entirely absorbed by the Mahila Vidyalaya and the Nishkama Karma Math." Since 1910, he devoted much of his time and energy to the task of securing financial help for the Vidyalaya and the Math and finding work and members for the latter.

The writer went on to point out the following features of the constitution and working of the Math which he described as objectionable:—

(1) It was housed in a building which was constructed for the Vidyalaya.

(2) The Math was managing all the affairs of the Vidyalaya.

(3) The Vidyalaya was under the absolute and complete control of the Math and even the subscribers had apparently no legal right to interfere with its affairs.

(4) Professor Karve was the sole and absolute dictator of the Math for the first five years.

(5) The Vidyalaya which is controlled by the Math and the Ashram are conducted as two separate institutions in two separate buildings and with two separate establishments under separate managements, although according to the annual reports for 1912, there were only forty-eight girls in the Vidyalaya and only a hundred and five girls in the Widows' Home (Ashram) School.

The most serious objection which the writer raised was against the basic ideals formulated and adopted for the Math. He asked:

"Is it morally right to allow inexperienced boys and girls

of the tender age of eighteen to bind themselves for life by the kind of pledges of poverty and self-abnegation which the Math exacts?"

Quoting the instances of undesirable results which were noticed in the working of similar institutions in the West and also in India, the writer uttered a grave warning.

"Platonic arrangements are not for this world and the evil results of the occasional scandals to which they give rise are so great that wise men will guard against the temptations and opportunities for abuse which Maths and Convents of this character afford so plentifully."

The writer struck a note of sympathy when he remarked:

"Things may perhaps go on well so long as Professor Karve is there to watch closely and exercise effective control. But it cannot be gainsaid that there are great dangers of abuse and corruption as well as of backsliding and hypocrisy and these, if and when they occur, will seriously injure not only the Math but the whole cause of social reform. The risks are great and the stakes heavy while the guarantees are few and feeble."

Nine persons were included in the list of the *Sevaks and Sevikas* of the Math in 1912. Four of them were widows between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five. It was also reported that five or six girls had taken pledges and were under training as probationers.

There was no suggestion that the Math should be disbanded. It was only suggested that those who are recruited as *sevaks* or *sevikas* of the Math should be persons above the age of thirty. It was also recommended that so long as any *sevaks* or *sevikas* of the Math are serving in the Home or the Vidyalaya, no inmates from the Home or the Vidyalaya or no one working on the staff of either of these institutions should be admitted as a *sevak* or *sevika* of the Math until two years had elapsed since the person's connection with the institution ceased.

With a heart that was near to breaking, Professor Karve read and listened to all that was being written and spoken against his new experiment. The ideal was lofty and pure above reproach. It was so high that only one in a million

could have conceived it. With a lonely vision of that ideal, the man who saw it proceeded to give it a name and shape. Not even his bitterest adversary could accuse him of having a selfish motive, and there was no malice in the criticisms that appeared in the press or arose out of the discussions which were taking place. As the "trusted and esteemed friend" writing in the columns of the Indu Prakash said, his article embodied "the views of a number of tried friends of the cause whom the writer took special care to consult."

It was impossible that with his sweet reasonableness and readiness to rectify his own errors, Professor Karve would ignore the sympathetic notes of caution which fell on his years from various quarters. It was becoming increasingly apparent to him that his purpose in founding the Math had failed to catch the imagination or win the appreciation of many of his own friends and well-wishers. Those who had come forward to take the vows of the Math did so not because they fully understood and appreciated its ideals but because it was their revered Anna who had started the Math. Nana Athavale, Varubai Shevade, Seetabai Annigeri, Seetabai Joshi, Gangubai Tambole, Banubai Aho—all of them had joined the Math when they were students. They never regretted the step in their later lives. All these names are now to be seen among the life-workers of the Widows' Home Association which came into being after the merger of the three institutions—the Home, the Vidyalaya and the Math.

There was pathetic evidence of the effect of what was going on on Professor Karve's mind in the following words which formed the last paragraph of the first annual report of the Math which was submitted in July 1912:—

"Humbly has the foundation of the Math been laid. It lies in the womb of the future as to whether a beautiful building will rise on this foundation in fulness of time or one stone followed by another will tumble to the ground. Sacrifice of wealth alone is not enough for the unhampered growth of such projects. What is more essential is sacrifice of such passions as pride and intolerance which are the real enemies. Instances are not wanting of institutions which have been destroyed by these passions."

With a humility that was the mainstay of his character, Professor Karve began to think of the best way of pulling the cause he loved so dearly out of his mire of criticism and misunderstanding. With faith and even with enthusiasm he returned to his idea of bringing about a merger of the Ashram and the Vidyalaya, with the Math yielding its ideals to the merger as the fountain spring of its inspiration.

The plan was placed before the Management of the Ashram which had already become a Society, and it was readily accepted after the necessary modifications were made in the constitution of the Ashram. These modifications were made for the purpose of making room for the objects and functions of the Vidyalaya and the Math.

Professor Karve welcomed this event as a happy culmination of all the trials and tribulations which he and his colleagues had to suffer. It was to him like gold that had to pass through fire before it could shine with its pure lustre. A Maharshi that he was and became known in later years, he considered it most apt to name the event "Triveni Sangam" by which name is known to countless pilgrims the confluence of the three holy rivers, Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati at Prayāg.

PART III

15

Journey's End ? No

IN 1912, the founder of the Nishkam Karma Math was overwhelmed by the criticism that was levelled against the constitution and objects of the Math. His mind at the time was filled with intense pain to see that his ideas and efforts were not rightly understood and appreciated. His mind was often disturbed by anxious thoughts. Still he went on with his work and daily habits. He continued to give whatever help others expected from him. He was at the time giving lessons from the English Primer to a forty-two-year old student. The student's name was Parvatibai Athavale. Parvatibai had been going on collection tours regularly every year, or even twice a year, since 1904. While doing this work, she found her ignorance of English a great handicap. Very often she used to get down at a wrong railway station because she could not read the name written on the signboard in English. She met people who could not understand Marathi and it was not possible for her to explain to them the purpose of her visit. Once or twice before, she had started taking lessons in English, but had to give up the effort for want of time. Now she felt sure that a working knowledge of English would be a great asset. Whose help could she seek? There was none among the teachers or workers of the Ashram who would be willing to spare time for her. But she knew that even in the midst of all his activities and worries, Anna would spare as much time for her as she would like to have. Whenever she went to him, he set aside the work in hand and

explained to her new words, phrases and constructions in English. One such occasion was the Diwali Eve *(Dhan Trayodasi)* in 1914. Professor Karve was busy writing the chapter dealing with the days of his boyhood at Murud. It was about eight o'clock in the evening. Parvatibai came and stood near him.

"Have you some time to spare for my English lesson?" she asked.

"Sure!" Anna replied. "Do sit down and open your book."

He set aside the sheets on which he was writing and was soon absorbed in teaching his student.

At this very time, he was also applying his mind to the task of settling the accounts of the Students' Fund of the New English School Association which he had himself started about fifteen years ago. Since the Anath Balikashram was founded in 1896, Professor Karve felt guilty of not having done adequate justice to what he owed as a life-member to the Deccan Education Society. Though the members of the Society and its Management found his work thoroughly satisfactory, he was not satisfied with the work he had been able to do in the Fergusson College or in the New English School. He felt keenly and earnestly that he should do something more than teaching his subjects efficiently. He was also deeply conscious of the fact that it was the status he had acquired as a member and worker of the Deccan Education Society that had given him success in the activities undertaken by him. He felt he would be guilty of ingratitude if he did not do something, however little, to help and further the cause of the Deccan Education Society.

Out of his anxious thoughts the way was found. At a meeting of the old students of the New English School which he convened, the New English School Association was founded. It was suggested that old students of the school should be asked to join the Association as members and should be requested to contribute a month's income every year to a Fund which was started under the auspices of the Association. Professor Karve had an ambitious plan of work and procedure for the Fund. It was decided that the Association should collect a lakh of rupees and hand it over to the New English

School. The work was well begun under Professor Karve's guidance but it was not possible for him to carry it out according to his plan and wishes. At the end of 1905, the total amount collected was Rs. 1484-12-5. With his own conscience acting as a judge to investigate his failings and omissions, he now resolved to do what he could without seeking co-operation or contributions from anyone else. From July 1, 1906 he began to add ten rupees to the Fund from his income every month. Before the boys in the Matriculation class passed out of the school he assembled them together and addressed them. While he was on leave for two years from November, 1910, he worked in the Ashram, and for the work he did, he received a small salary. He contributed the salary he received from the Deccan Education Society during this period to this Fund. This he did for eight months.

In April 1912, he completed the period of twenty years as a life-member of the Deccan Education Society. Now he was entitled to retire with a pension. Before retiring he thought of handing over the Fund to the Society but he was asked to continue for two years as Professor of Mathematics in the College. When, at the end of 1914, he retired, the total amount collected for the Fund was a little over three thousand rupees. This amount was handed over by him with all the papers to the Secretary of the Society on the day on which he bade good-bye to the Fergusson College and the Deccan Education Society.

Even before the professor took his tearful leave of the College he had served so faithfully for more than twenty years, the householder had relieved himself of the responsibilities and anxieties of his family. On that fateful day in 1908 on which he took the solemn vow of the Nishkam Karma Math, he had set aside those cares. From that day, he transferred all his earnings to the Math and took from the Math not a pie more than what was absolutely necessary for the maintenance of his family. From that day, he ceased to have any balance or savings with him. In actual practice, however, he had to take back from the Math whatever he surrendered, but there was this difference that the possessive or hoarding instinct was given up and the mind became free from all cares.

Yes, the man had become free from the cares of the family but the wife could not afford to be free from them. Baya had by now made her shoulders broad and strong enough to carry the burden of her famliy of a husband and three sons.

"Mr. Karve never earned much" Baya wrote in her reminiscences, "and he would prefer to spend whatever he earned for others and for the institutions he had founded rather than on the members of his family. This tendency of his made my task at home extremely difficult. I mustered up courage and made a resolve never to leave anything undone to give my sons a good bringing up. I did the household work without the assistance of a servant. The training I had as a midwife enabled me to earn a little. Mr. Karve once brought a girl to our house as a boarder. She belonged to a rich family. Mr. Karve was one of the three gentlemen who were appointed trustees of her property during her years of minority. As the other two declined the trusteeship, Mr. Karve became the sole trustee. I was glad to have the girl in my house and under my care mainly because Mr. Karve was to receive a trusteeship fee of four hundred rupees per year. For twelve or thirteen years the girl stayed with me. She was sickly and I nursed her with the tenderness of a mother. I was glad to have the amount of the annual trusteeship fee for the expenses over the education of my sons"

The ideal which Mr. Karve now set before his eyes was that a *vānaprastha* who, according to ancient Hindu tradition, was a person who had renounced all pleasures and cares of a *grihastha* or a householder. It was not at all difficult for him to assume the role of the *vānaprastha,* for his life as a *grihastha* was more like a *vānaprastha* than a *grihastha.* A striking feature of that life was a mind free from attachments and the employment of all energies for doing good to others.

In order to be a real *vānaprastha,* he decided to release himself from entanglements and obligations of all kinds. Henceforward, he would leave for his sons nothing more than what was just required for their education. It was no longer necessary for him to worry about the eldest of them, Raghu-

nath. It had pleased the father well to see that he passed the Matriculation Examination with the first rank thus making full use of the coaching his father gave him in Mathematics, History, and Geography. The same high standard of achievement was maintained at the college and the University examinations. Shankar did almost equally well at the Matriculation Examination. His father would have liked him to continue his studies at the Fergusson College after passing the Previous Examination, but he chose to take up the medical career. Dinkar joined the Fergusson College and Bhaskar was doing well at the New English School.

There were other obligations and entanglements of other kinds. Looking back on the years that had gone by, he tried to recollect the occasions on which he was unpleasant or impudent to anyone. There was one such which caused him the pain of self-torture many a time after the incident had happened. In 1907, the Managing Committee of the Ashram had met to consider his scheme of the Mahila Vidyalaya. The scheme was rejected and Mr. Karve had reason to feel disheartened. The meeting was over but the members of the Committe were still discussing the matter among themselves. At this time, he allowed his temper to get the better of his usual calmness and restraint of speech. He uttered insulting words while speaking to Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar, Chairman of the Committee. Nearly five years later, as the painful memory of the incident once again came back to him he felt an impulse to make amends. He was at Hyderabad (Sind) at the time. From there he wrote to Dr. Bhandarkar:

15th December 1911

Revered Sir,

I am exceedingly sorry for my insulting words and attitude at the meeting of the Committee of the Widows' Home, five years ago, when the question of admitting non-widows in the Ashram was finally decided. I was excited at the time and my conduct was disgraceful. For a long time I did not feel so and afterwards when I felt it I had not the courage to ask for forgiveness. However, better late than never. So

I now make an unreserved apology for my conduct of that night and I request you to be kind to me and pardon me.

I shall circulate a copy of this letter among the members of the Committee who were present that night when I return to Poona in the second week of January.

Yours obediently,
D. K. Karve.

Dr. Bhandarkar wrote the following reply:

Sangam, Poona.
23rd December, 1911.

Dear Mr. Karve,

I never thought much of the incident you mention which consisted simply in your saying that you did not want any committee for your new institution. I did not take it as an insult at all, but simply understood that our assistance was in no way required by you.

Yours sincerely,
R. G. Bhandarkar.

On August 28, 1913, a meeting was held at the John Small Memorial Hall in Poona. The speaker was Professor D. K. Karve and the subject of the paper which he read at the meeting was "My Twenty Years in the Cause of Indian Women". After the paper was read, printed copies were distributed. It enabled Professor Karve's critics as well as friends to have a more intimate knowledge and a better appreciation of the strenuous efforts he had made for improving the lot of Indian women and raising their status. Mr. K. R. Mitra, the editor of the popular Marathi Monthly, Masik Manoranjan, read Mr. Karve's talk and felt inspired. He first requested him to re-write the same in Marathi for his magazine. When Mr. Mitra had a favourable response, he wrote to Professor Karve again, asking him this time to write his reminiscences which he undertook to print and publish. Mr. Mitra had published a Marathi translation of Booker T. Washington's autobiography, and had distributed copies of the book among the subscribers of the Manoranjan as an annual gift. He was desirous of giving his subscribers copies of Professor Karve's

autobiography as a gift the following year.

One of Mr. Karve's weakest points has been his modesty. His immediate reaction to Mr. Mitra's request was to thank him and humbly say 'no'. After some time, however, he tried and succeeded in conquering his own diffidence. He felt that if the proposed autobiography had the same favourable reception from the public which his paper on "Twenty Years in the Cause of Indian Women" had, it would serve a useful purpose. It would give publicity to the work of the Ashram, the Vidyalaya and the Math., His *Atma-Vritta* (autobiography) was made available to the readers of Masik Manoranjan and to a much wider circle of admirers of Professor Karve during Diwali of 1915. In offering the book to the subscribers and readers of his magazine, the Editor described the author as "The man who had dedicated his all for the progress of Indian women and brought glory to Maharashtra by founding and conducting with eminent success the three institutions, Anath Balikashram, Mahila Vidyalaya, and Nishkam Karma Math".

Two months after the *Atma-Vritta* was published, Mr. Karve went to Bombay to preside over the annual session of the National Social Conference which was held there during Christmas.

Forty years ago, a boy had stood trembling before the Chairman of the Public Examination Committee at Satara. The Chairman had refused to admit him for the Examination because he looked too small. The same boy, fifty-seven years old now, was to appear before an assembly of all-India leaders as a pioneer of reform and to guide its deliberations!

Forty years! He was an aging man now and a man who was able to look back upon a life of many vicissitudes with gratitude but there was no pride in his feelings.

16

The Seed And The Plant

IT was an August morning in 1915. Mr. Karve was no longer burdened with the duties of a professor now. He worked at his table in the office of the Ashram at Hingne. He was now glad to be able to devote his undivided attention to the work of the Ashram. And there was enough work to engage all his energies.

The peon brought the morning mail and placed it on Anna's table. Setting aside the work in hand, he opened the letters one by one. Among them there was a packet which contained a pamphlet. He opened it and as he turned the pages, he found that it gave an account of the work of the Japanese Women's University.

The idea of a University for women was not altogether new to his mind. He had always felt, and very strongly, that the principal aim of the education of women should be to equip them with a training that would make them efficient housewives and mothers. Again and again, he had stressed this particular aim and the necessity of having a special course of studies for women in the annual reports of his institutions and in the occasional circulars he issued, for specific purposes. With this aim in view he had evolved the conception of a Maharashtra Women's University where higher education through the medium of the mother-tongue which would not cost much would be available. Although he had nursed the idea with fondness, he regarded it as too ambitious for him to take up. For nearly ten years, it had remained with him

without assuming a definite shape.

Fully absorbed as his mind was at that moment with the affairs of the Ashram and the Vidyalaya, Anna did not think of giving any more serious attention to the pamphlet on the Japanese experiment in the field of women's higher education than just turning over its pages hurriedly. He then put it into the drawer. In a short time, he forgot all about it.

The Indian National Congress was to hold its annual session in Bombay during the Christmas holidays of that year. According to the practice which was started by Mr. Ranade nearly thirty years ago, the annual session of the National Social Conference also was to be held in Bombay immediately after the Congress Session and in the same place where it was held. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, General Secretary of the Social Conference, wrote to Mr. Karve inviting him to preside over the Conference at its Bombay Session.

Having always regarded himself as a humble person doing his work in the remote corner of Hingne, Anna was altogether unprepared for an invitation of that kind. He thought that he was entirely unequal to the task of presiding over the deliberations of an All-India conference. He lost no time in writing to Sir Narayan Chandavarkar humbly and thankfully declining the honour. Sir Narayan was not a person who would regard the refusal as the final word. The proposal to have Professor Dhondo Keshav Karve, the pioneer in the cause of reform for women in Maharashtra, was accepted by all. Sir Narayan ultimately succeeded in persuading Mr. Karve to accept the invitation.

It was after he had agreed to go to Bombay as President of the National Social Conference that Mr. Karve remembered the pamphlet on the Japanese Women's University which he had received about four weeks ago. Fortunately, it was lying safe in the drawer in which he had kept it. He took it out and began to read it. The idea of a separate University for women came back to him, and he began to study the account given in the pamphlet carefully. He decided to have the Maharashtra Women's University as the principal theme of his presidential address.

The Women's University in Japan was founded in 1900

by those who felt that the Japanese women must not lag behind in the process of the national reconstruction which was taking place in the country. It was made clear that the aim of those who thought of founding a separate University was "neither to copy the higher institutions for women in America and Europe nor to rival the men's university courses in Japan." What the promoters of the University aimed at was to frame curricula of study which would suit the mental and physical conditions of women at that time, and gradually to raise their standard in accordance with general progress.

What appealed to Mr. Karve most was the emphasis that was laid by the promoters of the Japanese University on the life of the home as the main sphere of women's activities. It was here that the women was to take her place as the presiding genius by directing the activities of the life of the home and the family. That was the basis of the well-being of the society and the nation. The promoters wanted her to become the equal partner of man in the task of the national uplift which was undertaken and was being carried out in Japan for fifty or sixty years with enthusiasm and conspicuous success. Those who thought of founding a separate university for women in Japan had become aware of the one-sided progress that was taking place in the country.

One specific purpose the promoters of the women's university kept before their eyes was to find equal and adequate opportunities for women who do not marry. It was recognised that such women could play an important role in nation-building activities.

The three guiding principles were (1) to educate women as human beings for the development of their personalities, (2) to equip them to become good wives and mothers if they wished to marry, and (3) to educate them as members of the nation and as participants in the task of building the nation.

Mr. Karve pondered over the various features of the efforts which were being made for the furtherance of the cause of women's education in Japan. He took the principles which had guided those who had founded the Women's University in Japan as the basis of discussion of the theme in his address. He carefully and critically studied the progress

of the movement in Japan for this purpose.

Mr. Karve was careful enough not to accept everything that was being done there as the model for the experiment which he thought he would try for the women of Maharashtra. There was, however, one feature which struck him. The Japanese Women's University was altogether free from the control of the Japanese Government and did not receive any financial help from the Government. It had, however, the moral and material support of members of the Japanese Royal family and of individual officers of the Government in their personal capacities.

As he read and re-read the pamphlet, he was seized with the idea of doing sometinhg in the direction. He spoke to those who were intimately connected with the work of the Ashram and was happy to see that they supported the idea. His colleague of the Nishkama Karma Math, Mr. Gadgil, did more than giving expression merely in words to his sympathy with the new cause. He wrote to Mr. Karve on December 21, 1915, and offered ten thousand rupees, all that he was able to save after making provision for the maintenance of his wife and only daughter. The donation was offered for the college to be conducted at Hingne by the proposed Women's University for Maharashtra. The life-workers of the Ashram who were graduates also gave an assurance that they would work in the College without expecting salaries higher than those they were getting at that time.

The urge now became irresistible. Something had to be done and without loss of time. The date of the Social Conference was the 30th of December. During the next two or three days, Mr. Karve met members of the Managing Committee of the Ashram. The response he had from those members who included Dr. Bhandarkar, the Chairman, Mrs. Ramabai Ranade, Professor Bhate, Dr. H. S. Deo, Professor Sahasrabuddhe and Dr. P. D. Gune, was very encouraging. It was not possible for him to convene a meeting. A circular was, therefore, sent round. It stated—

"The Hindu Widows' Home Association should try to establish a women's university for Maharashtra to give education through the medium of Marathi with the English lan-

guage as a compulsory subject and that the first college of the University be started as soon as possible."

Having obtained the approval of the members of the Committee, Mr. Karve now turned to the task of giving the final touches to his presidential address. He showed it to his friend, Mr. K. Natarajan, the renowned editor of the Indian Social Reformer. Mr. Natarajan went through the address and made useful suggestions, but he told Mr. Karve that he did not at all like his idea of founding a women's university.

Several others whose opinions Mr. Karve valued also opposed the idea or sounded a note of caution. Among them was Dr. R. P. Paranjpye. On the eve of the National Social Conference, a biographical sketch of the President-elect written by Dr. Paranjpye was published. About Mr. Karve's new idea Dr. Paranjpye wrote:

"Mr. Karve's life work has shown stages of a regular evolution. Has the process of this evolution stopped, with the consolidation of all his educational institutions into one institution? He does not think so. Before his mind's eye he finds floating a women's university evolving out of his school. He aspires to make Hingne the centre of all work for the uplift of women.

"A women's University is certainly the normal course of evolution for woman's educational institutions. But, if we may venture to give a word of caution, we will say that "*festina lente*"—hasten showly—is still fit to be the guiding principle of conscious evolution".

Dr. Paranjpye was not the only one among Mr. Karve's well-wishers who held this view. They had, for the basis of their observations, the history of Mr. Karve's efforts in the field of women's education. About these efforts, Dr. Paranjpye observed,

"His little hostel in the city with two or three widows took twenty years to become a full high school. That school has yet to pass its first matriculate. Its funds are not very great, though what funds it has, are all to be ascribed to the indomitable energy of Mr. Karve himself."

Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar was Mr. Karve's guide and counsel-

lor in all his ventures. In a conversation which he had about the same time with another leader of social reform, Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, Dr. Bhandarkar expressed the same doubts and fears which Dr. Paranjpye had expressed in his biographical sketch. He said:

"Yes, Professor Karve is now busy with his new project of a women's university, but he has not paid any heed to a suggestion which I have been making about the Anath Balikashram for a long time. It is now more than twenty years since the Ashram was founded. During this period we have not been able to have a single widow or girl passing at the Matriculation Examination. I have been trying to impress on his mind the necessity and usefulness of collecting information about the girls whom we brought up and educated in the Ashram and have now gone out to take their places in life, but beyond getting a reply that they are all doing well in comfortable positions, I have not been able to get any useful information."

Mr. Karve knew that the advice given by his well-wishers to hasten slowly as Dr. Paranjpye had told him was sound. It had, however, now become a habit, almost a principle, with him to act at once, if act he must. As he says in the English version of his autobiography:

"It was a sound and prudent advice. But I was advancing in age and was already 57. Therefore, if any hazardous step was desirable, it was necessary to take time by the forelock. I knew the difficulties that had to be faced and the chances of failure far outnumbered those of success. The idea had to be given a trial at any risk. I thought that failure was no disgrace if sincere and unsparing efforts were made".

It was the dream of an idealist. It was like a madman taking a leap in the dark. It was all too clear even to persons who had known him very intimately and for many years that it would be impossible to hold him back. Dr. Paranjpye who had stayed with him for many years and grown under his eye knew that his words of caution would be of no avail. A few weeks before he wrote the biographical sketch, he had written the Introduction to Professor Karve's autobiography published by the editor of Masik Manoranjan. About Pro-

fessor Karve as a reformer he wrote:

"In matters of secondary importance—even those concerning social reform—he is not very dogmatic—for, as far as possible, he does not like to hurt or cause pain to anyone. But in matters in which a principle is involved he would not move an inch and will not sacrifice the principle for anything. In matters of real and abiding reform and in those which he is convinced are of vital necessity, he moves on and acts in the face of obstacles, however formidable."

The session of the National Social Conference in Bombay began on December 30. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, General Secretary of the Conference, was also the Chairman of the Reception Committee. He welcomed the delgates who came from different parts of the country. In his speech, Sir Narayan described the President-elect of the Conference as a silent and tireless worker and one of the greatest benefactors to the womanhood of the Presidency.

The resolution formally proposing Mr. Karve to the chair was moved by Mr. Gokuldas Kahandas Parekh, a veteran social worker of Bombay, and was seconded by Mr. Bhupendranath Basu of Calcutta. The resolution was further supported by Rao Bahadur R. N. Mudholkar of Nagpur.

After making a brief reference to the problems of social reform in general in his address, the President of the Conference dealt at length with the question of the education of women in the country. He began by quoting paragraph No. 83 of the well known Woods' Despatch of 1854 on education:

"The importance of female education in India cannot be overrated; and we have observed with pleasure the evidence of which is now afforded on an increased desire on the part of many of the natives of India to give a good education to their daughters. By this means a far greater proportional impulse is imparted to the educational and moral tone of the people than by the education of men."

The two principles which Mr. Karve enunciated as the basis of the secondary and higher education of women were:—

(1) The most natural and therefore efficient medium of instruction is the learner's mother-tongue.

(2) Women, as a class, have different functions to fulfil in the social economy from those of men.

He did not want to prevent all women from having those opportunities which were available for men in the field of education. In making this point clear, he said,

"I do not mean that the way should be rigorously barred against those whose ambition would be to beat men on their own ground and compete with them for prizes and honours in the existing universities. Those who would be in a position by intellectual, physical and financial equipment to do so, would certainly be glorious ornaments to their kind and also to the whole community in the present conditions. But we must recognise that both national and social economy require that women should occupy a station of their own distinct from that of men. That they are as integral a part of the social organism as men is beyond question, but that the office they have to fill is different, though equal—perhaps greater—in importance, is equally true."

Mr. Karve's proposals and his scheme of a separate university for women evoked very lively interest. It was as enthusiastically received as it was criticised, but it gave people interested in the cause of the education of women food for thought. Copies of the address he delivered as President of the Social Conference were distributed and reached far and wide. After about two months, he received a letter from Miss Margaret E. Roberts, Headmistress of the Girls' Grammar School, Bradford, asking him to send her 150 copies of the address for distribution among the members of the Teachers' Association. Miss Roberts added that she was prepared to pay the cost if a reprint of the address was necessary.

Shortly after his return from Bombay, Mr. Karve took the next step. He called an informal meeting of friends at the Fergusson College. Among those who attended the meeting were Dr. Paranjpye and Mr. Haribhau Apte who, with a few others, had expressed their disapproval of the scheme of a women's University; Professor K. R. Kanitkar and Professor H. G. Limaye who wholeheartedly supported the idea, and a few others who were not able to make up their minds.

It was decided at the meeting that the scheme should

be taken up, and that the aim should be to have a women's university for Maharashtra. It was also decided to have two separate electorates of graduate voters—one consisting of those who paid an annual subscription of ten rupees or a donation of three hundred rupees, and another of those who paid five rupees every year or a donation of a hundred and fifty rupees.

Professor Kanitkar, one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the scheme, gave a donation of three hundred rupees immediately after meeting was over.

It was not an easy task to decide what shape the scheme should finally take. Friends and supporters offered various suggestions, and most of them differed from one another on various points. Sir Shankaran Nair who was Member for Education in the Governor General's Executive Council looked at the scheme with a kindly eye, but said he would consider the possibility of giving Government aid to the scheme only after it was launched and had shown some progress. When he went to Banaras to meet Sir Shankaran, Mr. Karve took the opportunity to meet Dr. Annie Besant who advised him to have a women's university on an all-India basis. She was glad to hear about the proposed university and gave Mr. Karve a donation of a hundred and fifty rupees. Dr. Rabindranath Tagore was greatly interested in the proposal and particularly liked the idea that education was to be given through the vernaculars. He advised Mr. Karve not to subject his scheme to an elaborate process of delay in order to secure Government recognition. "It is far better" Dr. Tagore wrote, "that you should win it at the end than pray for it in the beginning."

Dr. H. A. L. Fisher, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield, had paid a visit to the Widows' Home while he was in India as a member of the Public Service Commission. According to him, "the establishment of a University for women would put the crown upon the noble work which you are doing in India for female education." He wished the founder success 'from the bottom of my heart', and added,

"Doubtless you will meet with obstacles, but these your moral courage will assuredly overcome."

While these messages good wishes and assurances gave considerable encouragement to Mr. Karve, they also provided the fortitude he needed very much to keep his mind calm against the criticism which was being levelled against the scheme. He was particularly pained to see how vehemently and with sustained vigour the editor of the Indian Social Reformer wielded his powerful pen to criticise his project. On February 27, 1916, Mr. Natarajan wrote:

"The immense personal devotion and sacrifice which enabled him (Professor Karve) to make the Hindu Widows' Home at Poona what it is today are bound to make any project which he conceives, if not a success, at least a serious distraction, hampering progress along established lines. We do not think that the scheme will succeed; it certainly does not deserve to succeed. What it may do is to lead to divided counsels and to further postponement of progress along established lines."

Mr. Natarajan was not without sympathy or admiration for the work which Mr. Karve was doing in the field of women's education. He felt it was his duty "to express our disbelief in it (Mr. Karve's new project) in unmistakable terms" because he was sure that "notwithstanding Professor Karve's excellent intentions the new project will act as a stumbling block in the way of women's education."

Without malice towards even the worst among his critics and with the faith that their criticism was offered with the best of intentions, Mr. Karve marked every word of what they said or wrote because he believed that it had a lesson for him. As he wrote in his autobiography,

"Without allowing myself to be filled with an undue satisfaction or pride by words of sympathy or to be disheartened by words of criticism, I tried earnestly to maintain the balance of my mind and judgment."

During Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Poona, Mr. Karve met him. Mahatma Gandhi suggested that he should see him in Bombay after a few days. When Mr. Karve explained to him his new idea, he approved of it and particularly liked his idea of making the mother-tongue the medium of instruction even in the higher stages. He, however, expressed his

disapproval of the provision to have English as a compulsory subject. It was Mahatmaji's considered opinion that even in higher education English should be voluntary subject. Mr. Karve found it difficult to agree with him and politely told him:

"It will be our misfortune to proceed without your sympathy if you insist that English should be kept as a voluntary subject."

Gandhiji kept quiet for some time. Then he said, "Mr. Karve, because it is you, I yield. However, my opinion is still the same."

Gandhiji offered to subscribe ten rupees annually. Mr. Karve was fully satisfied with the assurance he had from Gandhiji and his moral support. When he told him that he did not want any financial help from him, Gandhiji would not listen to him and requested him to collect his subscription by sending the annual report to him. Mr. Karve accompanied Gandhiji to Ahmedabad where he delivered a lecture on the aims and objects of the Women's University at a meeting presided over by Gandhiji.

In Madras, Mr. Karve was the guest of the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri of the Servants of India Society. Mr. Sastri was inclined to look upon the Project as a Utopian idea and told Mr. Karve that he was surprised to see him come like a madman all the way to Madras for support. In one day, Mr. Karve was able to enlist the support of about a dozen persons including Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar, the renowned editor of the Hindu. Mr. Sastri was so impressed with the perseverance and devotion with which Mr. Karve was pursuing his object that before the day was over he also offered his own name to be included in the Graduates' Electorate. He went further and gave Mr. Karve letters of introduction to a number of friends in Bangalore where also he had a very favourable response. The other places he visited were Calcutta, Lahore and Jullunder. While he was visiting these places, his other colleagues also were going round. Among them, Mrs. Venubai Namjoshi toured round Vidarbha and other parts of the Central Provinces. Parvatibai went to the Karnatak where she visited places like Belgaum, Dhar-

war, Hubli, Gadag and Bijapur. Miss Krishnabai Thakur, another worker, toured in Central India.

Within a short period of four months, they were able to enlist about twelve hundred members for the Graduates' Electorates.

After his return to Poona in April, Mr. Karve got preparations made for the election of the Senate from among the members of the Graduates' Electorates. Sixty members of the Senate who included five women were elected.

Before the first meeting of the Senate was held, Mr. Karve had to find two persons for the offices of the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor of the University. For the Chancellor's Office he could not think of anyone except his old guide and counsellor, Dr. Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar. He felt a little doubtful whether Dr. Bhandarkar would accept the office, particularly in view of the adverse criticism which was being directed against the project by persons like the editor of the Indian Social Reformer. With a nervous heart, he and Professor Divekar went to see the veteran pundit at his summer residence at the hill-station of Lonavla. They first met Sir Narayan Chandavarkar who also was at Lonavla at the time and, accompanied by him, they went to Dr. Bhandarkar. At first, it appeared that the old man who was nearing eighty at the time was in no mood to accept the office. It was probably his personal appreciation of the work which Mr. Karve had been doing for nearly twenty years under his own guidance that ultimately prevailed, and Mr. Karve returned to Poona with success in his mission.

For the other office, he asked Mr. Srinivasa Sastri. Declining the honour, Mr. Sastri assured Mr. Karve that he would induce Dr. Paranjpye to accept it. Mr. Karve himself could not speak to Dr. Paranjpye on account of the views he had already expressed on the project. He was, therefore, delighted when Dr. Paranjpye himself came to him and wrote his own name in the list of graduates who had joined the electorate, adding the figure of five hundred rupees as his donation to the new venture. It was, therefore, not difficult for Mr. Sastri to persuade Dr. Paranjpye to accept the Vice-Chancellor's Office

The first meeting of the Senate of the Women's University was held in Poona on June 3 and 4, 1916.

Less than nine months ago the idea of a women's University, no bigger than a mustard seed, was planted for the first time in Mr. Karve's mind by the unexpected arrival of the pamphlet about the Women's University in Japan. Within this short period, it took firm root in the soil of his own tireless efforts and the co-operation of his friends. For the initial success of his project Mr. Karve had reason to be grateful to many friends and well-wishers, but the first among them remained unknown to him for four years. During this period, it had remained a mystery as to who could have sent the pamphlet, so full of portents for the remaining years of his life, which he had received on that morning in August 1915.

Mr. Karve never failed to make a grateful reference in his annual reports to the pamphlet which had inspired him. A copy of one of these reports or of his printed appeal must have reached the hands of Babu Shiva Prasad Gupta of Banaras. He wrote to Mr. Karve in 1919. He was visiting Japan in 1915 with a friend of his, Professor Benoy Kumar Sirkar of Calcutta. During their visit to the Women's University there, they were greatly impressed with what they saw. They purchased half a dozen copies of the booklet which gave an account of the University and sent them to some of those Indians who, they knew, were working in the field of education and particularly that of women's education. Among these, was Professor Karve of whose institutions at Hingne they had heard.

On June 3, 1916, the idea of an Indian Women's University assumed a form and a name.

17

A Man Of Sixty

SIX girls from the Mahilashram of Hingne appeared for the Entrance Examination which was held by the newly founded Women's University in the last week of June 1916. Four of them were successful. They were admitted to the First Year Class of the College which was named 'Mahila Pathashala'. A fifth student who joined the Mahila Pathashala was Revati Ketkar who had passed the Matriculation Examination of the University of Bombay.

The Senate appointed Mr. D. K. Karve himself as the first Principal of the College. On July 6, 1916, the new College started functioning.

His work as Principal of the College required Mr. Karve to remain at Hingne, but he knew that his services would be more useful in the task of collecting funds for the University and the College and for making its work known to people far and wide. Mr. Karve, therefore, had Mr. Narayan Mahadev Athavale appointed as Principal of the College, and handed over charge of the post of the Registrar of the University to Mr. Hari Ramchandra Divekar.

With the alms-bowl in his hand, Mr. Karve once again set out on his mission. He went from town to town, from district to district. There was hardly any part of India he did not visit. Wherever he went, he spoke to the people and told them about the University and won their sympathy.

At the end of the first four years of its existence, the Indian Women's University had a balance of Rs. 2,16,041-10-5

after meeting all expenses. This was the outcome of Mr. Karve's tireless efforts. He was able to win the sympathy of all classes of people. Among them, there were a few wealthy well-wishers, but his sympathisers were mostly from the middle classes.

The progress of the academic work of the University during the first four years was very slow and was not very encouraging. On the staff of the College there were professors and lecturers with good abilities and attainments, but the number of students was small. It did not go beyond 20. In 1919, the University sent out its first graduate and the only one. The number rose to three in 1920.

The slow progress of the University and the lack of enthusiasm shown by girls themselves made Mr. Karve sad. Some of the girls who had joined the Mahilashram with a view to joining the Mahila Pathashala of the University later left it and joined the Girls' School at Huzurpaga. They did so because they realised later that the examinations conducted by the university and the degrees conferred by it were not rcognised by Governmnt.

Mr. Karve was not disheartened. The cause was a good one, and it was his faith that it must succeed. Without losing courage he worked. He found comfort in the thought that one of the greatest needs of the University—that of any public cause—was being satisfactorily met. He had no cause to feel disappointed about the response his appeal for funds evoked and the achievements of his tours. Help and sympathy came from unexpected quarters. This, he felt, was a very hopeful sign. Miss Ethel Everest, daughter of the man after whom the highest peak of the Himalayas was named, had stated in her will that whatever was left of her estate after giving donations to certain institutions, which she had named, should be given to an educational institution in India which worked idependently without any control of Government. When Mr. Karve read in the papers about Miss Everest's will, he thought of writing to Sir William Wedderburn, the great friend of India. He sent to Sir William the literature about the Widows' Home and the University, and requested him to see if financial help from Miss Everest's

estate could be obtained for these institutions.

In his reply dated July 19, 1916, Sir William wrote:

"I have read with the greatest interest and sympathy the printed papers you have sent me and you may rest assured that I will do all I can to help your valuable undertaking."

Owing to the war which was going on the value of the investments had depreciated, and there was nothing left from Miss Everest's property for an Indian institution. Mr. Karve's efforts in this direction, however, had success in a different way. Sir William Wedderburn's sympathy and enthusiasm for Mr. Karve's activities for the women of India were so roused that he wrote in "India", a weekly paper, a brief account of those activities. Although it was not possible for him to obtain any help from Miss Everest's funds for Mr. Karves' institutions, he sent him his own donation of three hundred rupees. At the request of Mrs. Henry Fawcett, Sir William wrote an article in 'Jus Suffraji' on the Indian Women's University. He sent marked copies of the paper to a number of influential people in England and India including Lord Morley, Lord Bryce and Lord Reay, the Viceroy of India, and the Governors of Bengal, Madras and Bombay.

In 1916, Government had invited the opinions of leading persons on women's education. A friend of Mr. Karve's who did not approve of his idea of the Women's University forwarded his opinion about that university to Government. He sent a copy of his letter to Sir William Wedderburn. In his reply Sir William wrote to him:

"I confess that my sympathies are with Professor Karve's gallant effort to found a Women's University. It may be a forlorn hope, but no great stronghold is taken without such an attack, and as the attempt is being made, I would gladly see it supported by all enlightened friends of women's higher education."

In order to carry on his work for India, Sir William Wedderburn had started an 'India Benefit Fund'. When the fund was finally disposed of after Sir William's death, his friend, Mr. H. L. Pollock, sent to Mr. Karve £ 150 for the Widows' Home and £ 100 for his University.

For every pice he received as a help to any of his insti-

tutions, Mr. Karve felt deeply grateful. He was grateful to everyone, but his feelings were more profound when help came from friends of limited means. Among such friends there was one who lived in far-off Uganda. Before he went to Africa, Dr. Vithal Raghoba Lande had visited the Widows' Home where one of his relatives was an inmate. Dr. Lande died in Africa on March 30, 1917, five days after he gave the final touches to his will. According to this will, he had appointed the Trustees of "Karve Female University (or whatever be the name of the Institution at Poona, India)" as his trustees in India.

The trustees in Africa sent Rs. 40,000 to Mr. Karve for disposal in accordance with Dr. Lande's wishes expressed in his will. Dr. Lande's old mother, his two wives and other relatives were generous enough not to raise any objections to giving a major portion of the amount to the Women's University. From the amount which Mr. Karve received, a building was erected in Poona for the Kanya Shala. The building is named after Vithal Raghoba Lande, the benefactors who gave the largest portion of his savings to the good cause which Mr. Karve had undertaken.

Not disheartened by the slow pace at which his project was moving forward, not bowed under the weight of criticism, and always grateful for the sympathy and support he received, Mr. Karve marched on. He marched on with faith and even with confidence. As he persevered and went on, his efforts did not fail to have a favourable effect even on the minds of his most formidable critics. On July 8, 1917, a year after the Indian Women's University was founded, the following comment appeared in the editorial columns of the Indian Social Reformer:

"We are glad to join in the welcome accorded to Professor Karve's Women's University and in the hope that that experiment will prove a success. The need for facilities for women's education is so vast and pressing that it is foolish to pin our faith in any one plan and method. Numerous and repeated experiments are necessary to determine what the best and most suitable scheme is in the conditions of the country."

It was an unusual tribute to Mr. Karve's devotion from

the editor of the Indian Social Reformer. He had formerly attacked his project bitterly and in strong terms on the ground that "notwithstanding Professor Karve's excellent intentions the new project will act as a stumbling block in the way of women's education" and was constrained to express his disbelief in it in unmistakable terms. Now after sixteen months, he had come forward to confess that it was "foolish to pin our faith in any one plan or method."

With the opening of the year of 1918, there was evidence everywhere in the country of an earnest desire to celebrate Mr. Karve's sixty-first birthday on the 18th of April of that year, and thus to place on record the gratitude which his countrymen and countrywomen felt for his efforts for nearly a quarter of a century for the raising of the status of Indian women. The occasion was celebrated in the midst of universal affection and respect. The principal function was held in Poona and was presided over by Dr. Ramkrishna G. Bhandarkar. The women of Bombay and Poona held a separate function which also was held in Poona. The chairman of the women's meeting was Dr. Kashibai Nowrange of Bombay. At this function a purse and an address were presented to Professor Karve on behalf of Indian women. The address paid a glowing tribute to Professor Karve's pioneering efforts and his zeal. The women who honoured him on the occasion of his sixty-first birthday had before their eyes the changes which had come over the Indian Society and in particular over the conditions of women during the twenty-five years which were crowded with the activities undertaken by him. Recalling not only his great services to the cause of womanhood, but also the great hardships he had suffered in those early years when he was working in the Fergusson College and, at the same time, doing the spade-work of the Ashram, the address acknowledged the fact that as a result of Professor Karve's efforts and achievements, it had become possible for the women themselves to take up the activities for their welfare and enlightenment.

Another notable feature of the celebrations was the special number of the Masik Manoranjan which the editor, Mr. Kashinath Raghunath Mitra, who had published his autobio-

graphy in 1915, brought out on the occasion. The special number was unique in several respects. It contained articles on the life and work of the founder of the Widows' Home, the Mahila Vidyalaya and the Mahila Vidyapeeth, and also articles dealing with the various problems concerning women's education, their social status and the general awakening which had taken place since the beginning of the twentieth century. Mrs. Shrirangammal, a social worker from Bangalore, placed Professor Karve in the high rank to which belonged Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Ranade, Vivekanand and Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. Mr. Natarajan, paid a brief but feeling tribute to Mr. Karve's work for the women of India. He could not help differing from Mr. Karve, he said, in such matters as the Women's University or the restrictions Mr. Karve had imposed against the remarriage of the widows of the Anath Balikashram so long as they belonged to the Ashram, but that did not come in the way of his appreciating Mr. Karve's great achievements which, Mr. Natarajan added, entitled him to a place of honour occupid by very few Indians. Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, Mr. Karve's cousin, who had known him well for over thirty years, wrote that even though Mr. Karve had become a pillar of strength to the whole of India, he was the same old Anna to the intimate circle of his relatives. It was impossible for them to think of him as a great man as he was as simple in behaviour and appearance as the twenty-year old Dhondu who left Murud forty years ago for Bombay to join an English School.

Many of Mr. Karve's friends who generally admired his work for women regarded his project of the women's university as a wild dream. If his idea of a separate university for women was a wild dream, more wild and more fantastic still was his idea of sending Parvatibai Athavale to England and America for a study of the English language. Her zeal for learning English could not help her much in her efforts because the Ashram took all her time and needed all her energies for its work. Still she could not give up the idea altogether. In 1914 she went to a Convent School at Bandra. A lady of forty-two years could not be admitted to the regular class of girls. A Christian teacher taught her for an hour

every day, but that was not enough. After a few months, Mr. Karve succeeded in inducing the Principal of the School to allow Parvatibai to attend the regular class. Even in the class room, the teachers hardly asked her questions or took the trouble to see whether she was able to follow what was being taught.

Then she went to a school in Bombay. It was the United Free Church Mission's Girls' School at Gowalia Tank. Parvatibai stayed here as a boarder for three years—from 1915 to 1918. She was able to complete two Readers, but even during this period she had more valuable help from the lessons Anna gave her during the holidays which she spent at Hingne than she had at the School. She did make some progress but she was not satisfied. Parvatibai still felt that an improvement in her knowledge of the English language and in her capacity to speak English would be an asset in her work.

It pained Anna to see how Parvatibai was struggling and how every effort and plan of hers failed to yield the desired result. He admired her perseverance and felt that it was his duty to do something to help her. He was sure that even at that age she was nearing fifty—a better knowledge of English would considerably enhance her efficiency, but he could not find an effective way out of the difficulties. Everything possible that they saw around them was tried but without much success, but they would not yield to·the failures which came one after another. Mr. Karve was straining every nerve to discover some new path. At last, out of his wild and desperate thoughts rose the still wilder and more fantastic idea of sending Parvatibai for six months or a year to England or America.

Once the idea was born, he would not allow it to remain idle with him. He proceeded at once to give it a concrete shape. About this idea and his resolve to pursue it, Mr. Karve says in his autobiography:

"It is a weakness in man to run after a forlorn hope even after all efforts for its fulfilment have proved futile. I was no exception to this characteristic of the human nature. I could see only one alternative—the last one left and the most difficult one, that of sending Parvatibai to England or America where she would be in the midst of people with whom she

would have to speak in English only during all hours of the day. Even if this episode was destined to end in a tragedy, I would see it to the last act of it until the curtain finally dropped on the tragic end!"

On October 5, 1918, a lady of forty-six who was already a grandmother sailed for America via Japan with the object of studying English.

In the annual report of the Widows' Home for 1920, Mr. Karve wrote:

"Knowing fully well that for a woman of forty-six, it was nothing less than a leap in the dark to undertake a journey to foreign countries, Parvatibai made up her mind to undertake it. She has no financial resources to fall back on, and yet she has not taken a pie from the funds of the Ashram. I induced her to face perils which I would not have faced myself. I must confess that she could make up her mind only because of the encouragement I gave her, and I now confess also that it was cruel of me to have so encouraged her. However, I have this compensation—that I did all this only because I had realised that Parvatibai has in her certain qualities far above the common run, and that those qualities would bear fruit only when they come under the influence of certain unusual and trying circumstances."

The women of Bombay and Maharashtra had given Mr. Karve a purse containing twenty-five hundred rupees on the occasion of his sixty-first birthday. He handed over the whole sum with two hundred rupees of his own to Parvatibai for her expenses. He knew that he was diverting the precious sum given to him by his sisters for a venture the results of which he could not foresee. He, therefore, resolved to treat it as a loan taken by himself and to set apart the amount with interest for some deserving cause.

Parvatibai returned to India after an absence of about twenty months. During her stay in America she collected funds for the Widows' Home. The amount she brought with her was separately invested for an endowment to be known as the American Scholarship Fund. She acquired some facility in speaking the English language during her stay abroad, but it was not of a permanent nature. The purpose for which

she went to America was not fulfilled, but the undertaking was not altogether in vain. Apart from the collections she was able to make, she returned with her mind enriched by her experiences and by the hardships she had to suffer in many of the places abroad and with a broader outlook. Soon after her return she forgot herself once again in her work for the Home.

Professor Karve was sixty. He was an old man now. Was he tired? After twenty-five years of hard, continuous work, it would have been natural for any man in much better circumstances and with a stronger physique, to say that after sixty he would like to retire. If some one else had told Professor Karve or if he had said to himself that it was now time to rest, something in him, would have at once revolted. That something was the urge to live, to toil and to serve. There was real devotion in the innumerable voices which joined in the prayer on the 18th of April, 1918, that Professor Karve may live to an age of a hundred years.

18

S. N. D. Thackersey Women's University

GENEROSITY is another name for Bombay. One of her citizens who gave her that name, was Sir Vithaldas D. Thackersey, an industrialist and a business-man. He was the head of the House of Thackerseys. Successful and prosperous in business, and one of those belonging to the first rank in Textile Industry, Sir Vithaldas was even better known for his munificent charity.

In 1917, this great donor gave a thousand rupees to Mr. Karve's University for Women for giving scholarships in the name of his mother. Next year he gave another thousand and promised to continue it every year.

In 1919 Sir Vithaldas planned to go on a world tour with a party of friends which included Sir M. Vishveshvaraya and Seth Mulraj Khatau. As Lady Thackersey and two other ladies also were to go with them, Sir Vithaldas wrote to Mr. Karve requesting him to find a suitable companion for them from one of his institutions.

Mr. Karve recommended Mrs. Sitabai Annigeri who had come to the Ashram as a young widow twelve years ago. Now she was a student in the Women's University's College at Poona. Premlilabai, Lady Thackersey, liked the young lady as she was intelligent and smart enough for the work for which she was chosen.

The party first visited the countries in the East. During their stay in Japan, Sir Vithaldas made it a point to visit the Women's University in Tokyo. At the time of their visit, there were seventeen hundred students in the colleges and

schools affiliated to the University. About seven hundred of these lived in the hostels attached to the University. The work of the University and all the institutions affiliated to it made a deep impression on Sir Vithaldas' mind. He was particularly impressed with the courses of studies in the University which included such subjects as housecraft, laundry work and gardening. On his way to America he discussed with his friends what he had seen in Japan and asked Mrs. Annigeri a number of questions about the Women's University at Hingne. He was particularly interested to know if Mr. Karve had been able to find a sufficient number of earnest workers for the University.

As a result of what he saw in Japan and what he later heard from Mrs. Annigeri, Sir Vithaldas Thackersay began to have ideas about developing the Indian experiment launched by Mr. Karve on the lines of the institution which he had seen in Japan.

Mr. Karve was among those who went to the pier to receive them when they returned. Sir Vithaldas asked Mr. Karve to see him before returning to Poona. When Mr. Karve saw him again later in the afternoon, Sir Vithaldas told him that he would like to discuss with him proposals relating to the Indian Women's University.

A few weeks later, Mr. Karve saw Sir Vithaldas Thackersey again at Mahableshwar. This time, Dr. Paranjpye and Principal Kanitkar of the Fergusson College were with him. As a result of the prolonged talks they had, Sir Vithaldas told Mr. Karve that he proposed to offer a donation of Rs. 15,00,000 to the University on certain conditions. This was something Mr. Karve had never expected.

Soon afterwards, a formal offer was received by Mr. Karve. The offer was accompanied by certain conditions. According to one of them the University and the institutions conducted by it should be named after Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey, mother of Sir Vithaldas Thackersey. It was also laid down that the meetings of the Senate of the University should be held in Bombay and those of the Syndicate may be held either in Poona or Bombay. It was agreed that the headquarters of the University should be shifted to

Bombay as soon as a suitable building was constructed for them. Sir Vithaldas Thackersey was to nominate five members of the Senate and after him, they were to be nominated by the eldest male member of the Thackersey House. The University was either to secure recognition from Government or collect a sum equal to that of Sir Vithaldas' donation. A sum of Rs. 52,500 being the interest on the amount offered would be paid annually to the University till the conditions were fulfilled. Thereafter the original amount of fifteen lakhs of rupees would be handed over to the University.

As soon as the negotiations were completed, the Women's University of Hingne was named 'Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Indian Women's University'. The College was taken over by the University. The University also took over the Kanyashala founded in Poona by Professor G. M. Chiplunkar, a life worker of the Ashram. It was, till then, conducted under the general supervision and control of the Hindu Widows' Association of Hingne.

Sir Vithaldas Thackersey took great interest in the activities of the University and its expansion. With his approval, a suitable site was selected for the new building for the College. The amount required for the purchase of the site was advanced by Sir Vithaldas himself. Another sum of Rs. 1,50,000 without interest was advanced by him for the construction of the building.

Like Sir Vithaldas Thackersey, his friend Seth Mulraj Khatau also had a generous heart and was ready to help good causes. He had gone to Poona for a brief stay. When Mr. Karve heard of the wealthy gentleman's visit to Poona, he went to see him. Professor Mydeo, a life workr of the Ashram was with him.

As they entered the compound of the house in which Seth Mulraj was living, they saw a man looking impressive but clad in a simple manner sitting in the verandah of the house.

As the two approached, the gentleman sitting in the verandah asked them who they were.

"We have come to see Seth Mulraj."

"What do you want to see him for?"

"We have come to tell him about our institution and seek his help and support for it."

"Please go away. I am sorry I cannot do anything for you."

They now knew that it was Seth Mulraj himself who was talking to them. Without saying anything more Mr. Karve turned to go and Professor Mydeo followed him. As they came to the gate, Professor Mydeo saw a member of Seth Mulraj's family standing there. He whispered into his ears Mr. Karve's name. The man ran to Seth Mulraj and told him. Mr. Karve and Professor Mydeo were immediately called back. With profuse apologies, Seth Mulraj received them When they left him, they had in their pockets a gift of Rs. 35,000. It helped Mr. Karve to bear half the cost of the student's quarters attached to the S. N. D. Thackersey College in Poona.

It now became possible for the founder of the S. N. D. T. University to expand the field of its useful activities. The first task Mr. Karve took in hand was the establishment of new schools and the affiliation of those which were in existence and were being conducted by others.

The first school to be taken over was Professor Chiplunkar's Kanyashala in Poona. It was Sir Vithaldas' wish that the University should conduct a school in Bombay and, if possible, it should have two sections, Marathi and Gujarati. Mr. Karve and a friend, Mr. Lakshmanrao Nayak, saw the authorities of the Chanda Ramji Girls' High School and Mr. Gajanan Bhaskar Vaidya who was conducting the Students' Literary and Scientific Society's Girls' High School. As they did not succeed in their efforts to have either of these schools affiliated to the S. N. D. Thackersey University, they decided to start a new school. Mr. Nayak who had retired from the Small Causes Court offered to work as Honorary Superintendent of the School which was named Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Kanyashala. Mrs. Parvatibai Athavale came to Bombay to assist Mr. Nayak in his work. After some time, Mrs. Sitabai Annigeri was appointed Superintendent of the Kanyashala. She relieved both Mr. Nayak and Mrs. Athavale.

The Vanita Vishram of Bombay gladly came forward to have its Girls' School affiliated to the S. N. D. T. University. At the invitation of some friends, Mr. Karve went to Satara. A beginning was made there in 1922 during the Diwali holidays. He was accompanied by Mrs. Kamalabai Deshpande who had become a *Grihitagama* (Graduate in Arts) of the new University in 1920. Within a few days of their arrival in Satara, on the Bhaubeej day, a Girls' School was founded with Mrs. Deshpande as Superintendent.

Belgaum and Sangli soon followed. Within five years, the S. N. D. T. Women's University had a net-work of Girls' Schools spread all over Maharashtra in palces like Poona, Bombay, Satara, Belgaum, Sangli, Wai and Sholapur. The local people in these places undertook the task of running the schools and collecting funds. They did all this under the guidance of Mr. Karve himself.

Before long, Mr. Karve realized that his original project of having a Women's University for Maharashtra only was too narrow not only for his high ideal of providing facilities for higher education for girls but also in view of the need which was felt in other parts of the country for such facilities. The University had already assumed an all-India character when it was named the Bharatavarshiya Mahila Vidyapeath (All-India University for Women).

In Ahmedabad the Gujarat Mahila Pathashala was founded by the Stri Kelavani Mandal. In 1920, the Mandal decided not to send up its pupils for the Matriculation Examination of the University of Bombay but to have a school-leaving certificate examination of its own. Three girls appeared for this examination and were successful. They were admitted to the newly-founded Gujarat Mahila Pathashala which was affiliated to the S. N .D. T. University.

The Mahila Vidyalaya of Surat was affiliated in 1922, and its example was followed by the Maharani Girls' High School of Baroda. At Bhavnagar the Mahila Vidyalaya was founded in 1925. It was affiliated to the S. N. D. T. University in 1927.

Within a few years, the Registrar of the S. N. D. T. University was able to say with confidence in his annual Report:

"The desirability of a separate University for Women is not now an open question and strenuous efforts are being made to make it a success."

Mr. Karve continued to work as the organiser of the Uuniversity. It was on account of his personal efforts and the influence he was able to exercise that Girls' Schools in Bombay and in towns like Satara, Sangli and Belgaum were affiliated to the Women's University. He was able to induce life-workers of the Widows' Home and the Graduates of the University to work in these schools on small salaries. Most of these schools were founded as middle schools and by adding a higher standard every year they became full high schools in the course of a few years.

It was the good fortune of the University that eminent scholars and educationists like Dr. Sir Ramkrishna Bhandarkar and Dr. R. P. Paranjpye or men in the first rank of public life like Sir Mahadev Chaubal, Sir Lallubhai Shah and Sir Chunilal Mehta associated themselves with its working.

The Entrance Examination was held in four languages, i.e. Marathi, Gujarati, Sindhi and Telugu, but at the college education was given through the first three languages only. Girls who studied privately were allowed to appear for the Entrance Examination and for the higher examinations.

The Editor of the Indian Social Reformer who was not in favour of a separate university for women had to acknowledge in 1927 that the self-sacrificing zeal of Professor Karve to which the Women's University at Hingne, owed its existence would always be gratefully remembered by social reformers all over the country.

Mr. Natarajan was speaking as President of the Indian Social Conference which had met in Madras. He said that:

"In the present circumstances of our country when a sort of tradition of women's intellectual inferiority has held sway for many centuries, it is necessary, at least till that tradition is wholly destroyed, to make no distinctions in the courses of study especially in the higher education open to men and women."

At the same time he had to acknowledge "that every method and every system which promises to bring the be-

nefits of education of some kind to girls and women who would otherwise go without them is to be welcomed; from that point of view the Women's University is a very valuable and interesting experiment."

The main objection that was raised against Professor Karve's experiment by its critics was that it was based on the principle of having separate courses of studies for women. Another and an equally strong objection was that a University which had the vernacular as its medium was not in the interests of higher education of women. Mr. Karve himself had no doubt in his own mind about either of these questions. Even before the Women's University was founded, he had made it clear that while he recognised the fact that there are and always would be some women who would beat men on their own ground and compete with them for prizes and honours in the existing Universities, he felt that for a large number of women it was necessary to have an education which would equip them for the place they would be called upon to occupy—a place which was distinct from that of men. His belief in the mother tongue as the most natural and therefore the best medium of instruction at all stages was based on sound educational principles. He, therefore, did not allow his mind to be disturbed by the objections which were raised from time to time. He would have liked more girls and women to join the Women's University, but he knew that as the examinations conducted by the University and the degrees conferred by it were not recognised by Govrnment the response would be poor. So long as it was not possible for the University to obtain recognition from Government, he had to depend on his own efforts and the efforts of his colleagues and on the goodness of the cause itself, for the progress of the experiment which he had undertaken.

There was no lack of support and enthusiasm among the educated public. The All-India Women's Educational Conference which held its first session in Poona in 1927 lent its wholehearted support to the idea of giving the greatest importance to a type of education which would develop in the girls the ideals of motherhood and of social service. The Conference recommended to Government that recognition should

be given to educational institutions like the Indian Women's University "which have been working on the experimental lines advocated by this Conference."

Even the Department of Education of the Bombay Presidency acknowledged the good work which the Women's University was doing. In its annual report for 1925-26 it said:

"A number of schools throughout the Presidency are affiliated to the Poona Women's University. Some of them are recognised by the Department. A special feature of these schools is that they use the vernacular as the medium of instruction for all subjects except English throughout the school course."

The annual report of the Education Department paid a tribute to Mr. Karve's work in the following words:

"In the cause of female education, especially the education of adults, the efforts of Professor D. K. Karve on the one hand and of Mr. G. K. Devdhar on the other are commendable. Professor Karve's tiny little colony of thirty years ago has now developed into a full-fledged University for Indian Women. Its special feature is that the medium of instruction is the vernacular and the aim of adapting girls' curriculum to their special needs and conditions and of retaining the simplicity of Indian style of living is steadily kept in view."

Keeping his ears open and his eyes watchful, Professor Karve gave earnest thought to all that was being said and written about his experiment. In all things possible, he accepted the suggestions made by his friends and critics, but without sacrificing the principles which he had accepted after careful considerations.

In 1928, Mr. Karve was able to look back with satisfaction that his efforts had not altogether been in vain. It was with pride that he could look upon the Indian Women's University founded by him as the only university in the world which owed its existence largely to the contributions of the upper middle class and even the lower middle classes.

He was seventy now. The life-workers of the Ashram brought out the second edition of his autobiography on his

seventy-first birthday. Mr. Karve gladly undertook to add a few chapters to the original book and in these he mainly gave the history of the origin and growth of the University. He was able to complete these chapters in two months. He ended the closing paragraph of the last chapter with the following words:

"If there is any truth in the idea of re-birth, and if the particular form of re-birth is shaped by the desires a man's heart is occupied with at the time of his death, I pray that the Ruler of the Universe may enable me to serve during all succeeding births the same cause I have been able to serve during this one and that my devotion for it may increase with every birth."

On April 18, 1928, the seventy-first birthday of Mr. Karve, the Municipality of Poona named the road leading to Yerandavane 'Karve Road'.

19

The Tours And The Test

SINCE the Widow Marriage Association was founded in 1893, Mr. D. K. Karve had travelled throughout India and had visited almost every important city and town in the country. For a few years, he went on lecture tours on behalf of the Association. When the Anath Balikashram was founded in 1896, he continued to utilise the long summer vacations and even the shorter winter vacations for tours to collect funds for the Ashram. It became a habit with him which stood him in good stead even after he was sixty. It became necessary for him to visit different places and people in India either to collect funds for the S. N. D. T. University or for expanding the University's sphere of work by establishing new schools or affiliating old ones.

Until he was seventy, he had not thought of leaving the shores of India. It was at his suggestion that Parvatibai Athavale had gone to foreign lands. She had returned richer in experience and wider in outlook. She had also been able to collect funds for the Widows' Home during her stay in America and in England.

The future of the University constantly occupied Mr. Karve's thoughts. It was necessary, he felt, to make a sustained effort to enlist the sympathy and support of educated Indians for it. As he thought of the various ways of making the University and its aims more widely known, it occurred to him that if he visited England, he would be able to meet a number of young men from all parts of India who had gone

there for higher studies. Possibly, if he succeeded in impressing them with the usefulness of the work the University was doing, they would carry the impressions back with them when they returned home, and spread them among their people. There was also a possibility of making collections for the University as Parvatibai had done during her travels for the Widows' Home.

His friends and relatives did not much appreciate the idea. They told him that it was too hazardous a step for a man of his age to take. They did their best to dissuade him.

Mr. Karve himself did not think that it was as hazardous as his friends thought. His youngest son, Bhaskar, was at the University of Leeds in England and was about to complete his studies. Bhaskar was willing to stay on and to accompany his father during his tours in Europe and in the United States. Irawati, wife of Mr. Karve's third son, Dinkar, was in Berlin, and Professor H. R. Divekar, a life worker of the Ashram, was in Paris. With their help, he would be able to travel without difficulty. Mr. Karve had also heard of two international educational conferences which were to be held during that year, one at Geneva and another at Elsinore. These would give him an opportunity of meeting workers in the field of education in the different parts of the world.

The Syndicate of the S. N. D. T. University supported Mr. Karve's plan and sanctioned Rs. 5,000 for his expenses. Mr. Karve looked upon this decision of the Syndicate, which was endorsed by the Senate, as a happy augury.

He sailed from Bombay by the P. & O. Steamer, *S. S. Rawalpindi* on March 16, 1929. He was not without company on board the ship. Mrs. Kamalabai Deshpande, a life-worker of the Ashram, travelled with him. She undertook the trip for reasons of health. Mr. Keshavrao Vakil of Hyderabad was another friend who was of much help to Mr. Karve during the voyage. Professor Divekar joined him at Marseilles. They reached London on April 1.

The first three months and a half were spent in England. Mr. Karve took every opportunity to meet Indians and Englishmen and tell them about the Womens' University. When

he spoke to Englishmen, he sought to explain to them the educational and social problems in India and the efforts which were being made by educated Indians to solve them. He strove to remove, as best as he could, the misconceptions created in England and in other Western Countries by certain propagandists.

At Malvern he attended a Primary Teachers' Conference where he met 125 women teachers and a few men teachers. The topic which was chosen for discussion at the conference was "New Ideals in Education". Mr. Karve was asked to speak on Women's Education in India. In his talk, he gave a brief account of the various movements which were started for the promotion of women's education in India and spoke in detail about the S. N. D. T. University. A small collection was made for the University after his talk.

Mr. Karve spent an enjoyable week at Sandown where about 125 Indians—men, women and children—belonging to different communities and creeds met at a conference.

Mr. Pollock and other friends arranged meetings to enable Mr. Karve to establish contacts in London. One of these meetings was held under the auspices of the East Indian Association in the Caxton Hall. Lady Simon who had visited the S. N. D. T. University during her visit to India was in the chair. Mr. Karve read a paper on 'Education of Women in India'. After the reading of the paper there was a lively discussion in which Englishmen as well as Indians participated.

Professor Divekar organised a collection in Paris with the help of some Indian pearl-merchants, whom he knew. A party was arranged at which Mr. Karve and a few others spoke. The response to the appeal Mr. Karve made for funds was very encouraging.

The Conference in Geneva was held from July 25, to August 4. About 1,500 delegates from different parts of the world attended it. Besides lectures and discussions on topics of general interest, there were sectional meetings. Mr. Karve spoke on "The Indian experiment in higher education for women". The Indian delegation organised a meeting of delegates from Asiatic countries. At this meeting it was resolved

to hold an Asiatic regional conference on education in India.

Shortly after the Geneva Conference, Mr. Karve went to Elsinore to attend another international meeting of educationists which was held from August 8 to August 21. It was organised by the New Education Fellowship and was attended by nearly 2000 delegates from all over the world. They discussed the various modern experiments which were being tried to give the child opportunities for self-education. Mr. Karve was struck with the work of the conference particularly as it was organised mostly by women. The deliberations of the Elsinore Conference were presided over by Mrs. Beatrice Ensor, a woman of great ability.

At the Geneva Conference, Mr. Karve met Mr. R. V. Gogate, an Indian educationist, who had come from New York to attend the Conference. Mr. Gogate undertook to make arrangements for Mr. Karve's American tour. During his stay in New York, Mr. Karve stayed at the International House which accommodated five to six hundred students from almost all the nations of the world. Mr. Karve had an enthusiastic reception from the Indian residents in New York who presented him with a purse of four hundred dollars.

Wherever he went, he found the people very eager to hear about India. He delivered lectures at many places and the subject of his lectures was either women's education or social reform in India.

After completing his American tour, Mr. Karve went to Japan where he was particularly interested in visiting the Women's University at Tokyo. Dr. Aso, friend and colleague of Mr. Naruse, the founder of the University, received Mr. Karve and the other members of the party very kindly. It gave Mr. Karve particular delight to see that although the University had suffered a great loss as a result of the earthquake of 1923, it continued its activities unhampered. The work was carried on in temporary huts while permanent buildings were being erected again.

After his tour of thirteen months, Mr. Karve returned to India in April 1930. He was able to collect Rs. 27,000 for the University, while the total expenses of the tour came to Rs. 12,700 only. He was glad that his world tour was not

a financial burden on the University. About the tour, Mr. Karve wrote in *"Looking Back"*, his autobiography in English:

"I think that our tour round the world was, on the whole, fairly successful. First, I was able to maintain excellent health and not a single engagement was missed. In America, for want of time, we often travelled at night and I did not mind changing trains when necessary even in the bitter cold at midnight. Secondly, we were able to meet a good many prominent people all over the world, and with several of them we could spend hours exchanging views about social and political questions. Thirdly, we could dispel a good deal of misunderstanding caused by recent books on India. Very often the questions after many of my lectures referred to the untruthful or exaggerated statements about social customs in India. Fourthly, there was no financial loss, although, perhaps, the addition to the University funds was somewhat less than what it would have been, if I had worked in India. Lastly, it is no small matter that the Indian Women's University came to be known all over the world. At each place I visited publicity was given to the work of the University through special articles and reports of my lectures in local papers. At any rate, this tour which was a leap in the dark and about which I had great misgivings brought me back full of hope and vigour to carry on my work."

Among the delegates who attended the international conference on education at Geneva, there was one who had met Mr. Karve before. Professor Fredrick J. Gould had spent a few weeks in India in 1913 and had visited the Fergusson College. When Professor Gould met Mr. Karve in Geneva, they "plunged into fraternal converse straightaway". As he wrote in the Preface to Mr. Karve's autobiography in English. Professor Gould learned that Mr. Karve had sat among his Poona audience when he gave an ethical story lesson to a class of boys in the Poona High School. After referring to Mr. Karve's memorable journey to Satara for the Public Examination in 1875, and to his bold effort in founding the Women's University in 1916, Professor Gould wrote in that preface:

"Then follows the splendid record—to me as enchanting as the chronicle of Marco Polo—of our pioneer's passage round the globe by the route of London, Dublin, Geneva, Elsinore, by the Baltic sea, United States and Tokyo."

Even before he got over the fatigue of the strenuous thirteen-month tour round the world, Mr. Karve began to think of visiting that part of the world which was left out during his first tour—Africa. His eldest son, Shankar had made Mombassa in East Africa his home and was one of the prominent medical practitioners of Kenya Colony. As soon as the idea occurred to his mind, he wrote to his son. Shankar in his reply, could not hold out high hopes of success but he said that the visit would not be altogether fruitless and that a fairly good collection could be made in East Africa for the Women's University. Mr. Karve lost no time in obtaining the sanction of the Syndicate of the University. He left Bombay for Mombassa on December 31, 1930. Baya went with him this time. Her main purpose was to meet her son, her daughter-in-law and grand children, (and she paid for her passage from her own savings.) Mr. Karve visited different towns in Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyaka, Zanzibar and in Portuguese East Africa. He spent about six weeks in South Africa. There was an encouraging response to his appeal for funds. The total collections made in Africa amounted to Rs. 34,000. The expenses of the tour were a little over Rs. 2,000. After an absence of nearly fifteen months, Mr. Karve and his wife returned to India on March 12, 1932.

For the S. N. D. T. Women's University, Sir Vithaldas Thackersey's early death in 1922 was a great blow. Ever since he began to take interest in the work of the University Sir Vithaldas not only gave it the princely donation, but devoted much of his time and energy to see that its work was properly planned and carried out. The University was deprived of his fatherly care. To Mr. Karve it was a personal loss. He looked in vain for another supporter and well-wisher as kind and as generous as Sir Vithaldas was. After his death, the executors of his estate continued to pay the annual interest on the amount donated by him, and the University annually received Rs. 52,500 from them. It was a matter of

satisfaction that Lady Premlila Thackersey, after the death of her husband, began to take interest in the affairs of the University. She was elected on the Syndicate in the year 1926.

In February 1932, unfortunately, differences arose between the Trustees of Sir Vithaldas Thackersey Trust and the University authorities regarding the fulfilment of certain conditions. The grant was paid in monthly instalments. The amount for the month of February was received as usual, but soon afterwards a letter signed by the three executors was received by the Registrar of the University. The letter was dated February 25, 1932. It contained an intimation about the decision of the Executors to discontinue the annual grant of Rs. 52,500.

Mr. Karve was in East Africa when the Registrar received this letter. He was informed about it immediately on his landing in Bombay on March 12. The news almost stunned him but he did not lose courage. He must face the ordeal as it came. He regarded it as a test for himself and for his colleagues.

It was immediately necessary to fill the gap of Rs. 52,500 in the annual receipts of the University and to make a provision for this amount in the annual expenditure of Rs. 70,000.

At this dark hour of trial, Mr. Karve's first thought was to consult his closest associates, the life-workers of the Hindu Widows' Home Association. Had it been an ordinary matter of an administrative or an academic nature, it could have been taken up and disposed of by the Senate or the Syndicate of the University. From the very start, Mr. Karve had assumed the moral responsibility for the financial stability of the University. He now felt that it was more for him than for the Senate to meet the situation. He prepared himself to meet it with a brave heart.

His colleagues did not fail him. They rose to a man and offered to do whatever he would ask of them. They all resolved to accept a cut in their monthly salaries. Out of a monthly salary of Rs. 125, each life-worker paid back Rs. 50. Other teachers in the college did not lag behind. They also offered to work on reduced salaries. The amounts of grants given to affiliated institutions were reduced. All

these measures of retrenchment and economy resulted in an annual saving of not more than Rs. 17,500 which was just one third of the total amount. A public appeal was made for special contributions.

The University Senate also took prompt action. Soon after the receipt of the letter from the Executors of Shri Sir Vithaldas' estate, Sir Chunilal Mehta who had been Chancellor for six years sent in his resignation. Mr. Justice S. S. Patkar who was Vice-Chancellor stood by the University in its dark hour of trial and gladly accepted the office relinquished by Sir Chunilal Mehta. The Senate unanimously elected Mr. Patkar Chancellor of the University.

The Senate approved of the proposal to draw from the permanent fund of the University which was built up during sixteen years if funds from other sources were not available. An emergency budget was prepared with the Chancellor's approval and was accepted by the Senate.

Mr. Karve's reaction to the difficult situation is reflected in the following passage which is taken from his English autobiography:

"There is probably no unmixed evil or unmixed good in the world. Even calamities have their useful function. The earnestness of the workers and the real usefulness of the movement are tested. It would have been natural for the people to entertain doubts about the stability of the University under such a calamity and the natural consequences would have been the falling off in numbers in schools and colleges. The numbers of the candidates appearing for the different examinations were also expected to be affected but nothing of the sort took place. On the contrary these numbers increased even when the fees had to be enhanced."

Efforts to arrive at an understanding with the Executors of Sir Vithaldas' Estate proved unsuccessful. It was therefore decided to file a suit against the executors of the Will of Sir Vithaldas Thackersey under Section 92 of the Civil Procedure Code on the Original Side of the Bombay High Court.

The suit was filed by the Advocate General but it did not come up for hearing for two and half years.

Nearly three years had passed and still there was no sign of improvement in the situation. In December 1934, Mr. Karve called a special meeting of the life-workers of the Hindu Widows' Home Association. The meeting was held under the heavy cloud of uncertainty and anxiety. Almost all of the seventeen life-workers of the Association—men and women—were willing to do their utmost. They resolved to adopt such measures as would be necessary in case the difficulties continued for a period of ten years. It was resolved to accept a further voluntary cut in their salaries. This decision of the life-workers had a great moral effect on the efforts which were being made for collecting funds from the public.

On the advice of Mr. S. S. Patkar, Chancellor of the University, who was also an eminent lawyer, an independent suit was filed after consulting the Advocate General. An application for the appointment of a Receiver for the estate of Sir Vithaldas Thackersey was also filed and it came up for hearing on April 9, 1935. Mr. Justice Rangnekar who heard the application advised the parties to come to compromise, and offered himself to arbitrate. There were three sittings for the hearing and they were held in Justice Rangnekar's chamber. At the last sitting the Judge was requested to withhold his arbitration award until another effort was made to arrive at a compromise. As a result of prolonged discussions, the terms of the consent decree agreed upon by both sides were presented to the Court. With the acceptance of these terms, the dispute between the Univrsity and the Eexecutors of Sir Vithaldas Thackersey's Will came to an end on April 17, 1935.

It was agreed that the annual grant of Rs. 52,500 being the interest on the amount donated by Sir Vithaldas Thackersey should be paid permanently in quarterly instalments. The University agreed to fulfil certain conditions which included the raising of a permanent fund which would bring an annual income of Rs. 52,500.

The transfer of the office of the University from Poona to Bombay had far-reaching results. The University and its administration were separate from the Hindu Widows' Home Association. The University came into being in 1916 as an independent organisation, but between the University and the

older institution, the Anath Balikashram of Hingne, there were ties which had become stronger with the passage of years. Mr. Karve who founded the Ashram was also the founder of the University. All the life-workers of the Ashram regarded the progress of the University as a moral responsibility on themselves and therefore worked for it whole-heartedly. Ten of them had been working in the University as professors or lecturers. One of the best among them had taken up and was carrying out with distinction and self-less zeal the duties of the Registrar of the Univerity. Everyone of them regarded the work of the University as an extension of the work of the Ashram. The transfer of the University's Office to Bombay was one of the conditions laid down by Sir Vithaldas himself. It was therefore inevitable. But when it took place it was like tearing away a piece of flesh from the hearts of the workers of Hingne.

20

A New Activity

THE University was now placed on a smooth path. Mr. Karve was confident that it no longer required his personal care and labours, and watched the efforts and labours of those who had come forward to undertake the task of expanding the work of the University. Thereafter, there was no voice of discord or criticism regarding the usefulness of the University. His faith in his own ideas about the University remained unshaken and it was strengthened further by the satisfaction with which he looked back on its achievements of the last twenty years, modest though they were. It was a matter of great satisfaction to him that Lady Premlila Thackersey was taking great interest in the affairs of the University and even taking a lead in several important matters.

With a mind at peace the old man was now able to think of his family—his wife, his sons and daughters-in-law and his grand children.

He was happy to see that all his sons were doing well. The eldest of them, Raghunath, had obtained the Diplome d'Etudes Supecieures in Mathematics at the University of Paris. After serving for a few years as Lecturer in Mathematics in the Elphinstone College, he joined the Wilson College Bombay. For some years he had been devoting his attention to the problem of birth-control and similar other questions. His work in this connection was not liked by the authorities of the Wilson College who asked him either to give

up those activities or to resign. Professor R. D. Karve would not give up the work which he had chosen with a view to doing some social service according to his own light. He therefore tendered his resignation. After leaving the Wilson College, he started a birth-control clinic. His wife, Malatibai, who was one of the early students of the Balikashram, assisted him in the work of the clinic. Mr. Karve did not agree with many of his son's views and did not approve of some of his activities. But he admired the courage and selfless zeal with which Professor R. D. Karve devoted himself to the work he had chosen.

His second son, Shankar, had settled in Mombassa in East Africa. During his visit to Africa, Mr. Karve was pleased to see that his son was not only doing good work as a medical practitioner, but was also taking part in social and political activities as a Municipal Councillor and as the General Secretary of the East African Indian Congress. Dr. S. D. Karve was highly respected as one of the leading Indians in Kenya Colony. His wife, Revatibai, worked for a time as Honorary Principal of a Girls' School which the Indian community started when the Government shifted the existing Girls' School to a distant place, and made it practically impossible for the Indian girls to attend it.

Mr. Karve was particularly glad that his third and fourth sons, Dinkar and Bhaskar, had joined the institutions in which he had worked and which he regarded as the pride of Poona. Dinkar who was a Ph.D. of the Leipzig University, had joined the Deccan Education Society as a life-member. Bhaskar took up the work of the other institution—founded by Mr. Karve at Hingne. Professor Dinkar D. Karve's wife, Irawati, also joined the Hingne Institution as a life-worker and served as the Registrar of the Women's University. Kaveri, Bhaskar's wife, was a teacher in one of the schools at Hingne.

While Mr. Karve himself was devoting his time and energies to the institutions which he had founded, his wife, Baya, was doing valuable work in giving shelter to orphans in her own home and bringing them up. The tender care she bestowed on them became the wonder of those who lived in the neighbourhood. They remarked that she gave those orphans

more of her love and care than to those who were born of her. Baya did not deny the fact. She found greater happiness, she said, in bringing up those unfortunate children who were unwanted and were left uncared for. She admitted that in looking after those boys and girls she even neglected, to some extent, her own sons. Sometimes, she confessed with remorse to her sons that she had not done enough for them. But they protested. "You have done for us what very few parents are able to do." they told her.

When her youngest son, Bhaskar, completed his University education and took the degree in Science, Baya felt that there was nothing more for her to do for her sons. She could not sit idle at home. She still had '*my own children*', as she loved to call the orphans, to look after, but they did not take up all her time. She, therefore, thought of taking up some work to help the institutions started by her husband. She first took up the sale of the copies of the second edition of Mr. Karve's autobiography the publication of which had been undertaken by the Ashram. She resolved to collect the amount which the Ashram had still to repay on account of the expenses over the publication of the book. While Mr. Karve was abroad on his travels in Europe and America, Baya toured in the cities in the Northern India, all alone, and sold a large number of copies. When she returned from her tour, she felt happy and proud that she had been able to do good work for the Ashram and also spend the time profitably in reviving old friendships and making new ones in the different cities and towns she visited. Another useful activity Baya took up was the annual collection made during the Diwali festival, known as the Bhaubeej Fund. This Fund was started by Professor G. M. Chiplunkar, a life-worker of the Ashram and in Baya, Professor Chiplunkar found not only a valuable colleague but a source of inspiration and strength. The zeal with which Baya worked and moved about put to shame many a younger worker. Baya accompanied her husband to Africa. Her main object was to meet her son and his family. Soon after their arrival in Mombassa, Baya found that the pleasures and comforts of her son's large house were too boring to her. She therefore, started her collection work

and before she returned to India, she was able to collect Rs. 2,000 for the Ashram.

For a time, after the settlement of the dispute between the University and the Trustees of the Thackersey Estate, Mr. Karve felt that he would spend the remaining years of his life in the company of his dear ones, surrounded by his grandchildren. He looked forward to the dedication of those years to the inward pursuits of the mind which was now free from all attachments. He was now entitled to the peace and contentment which come to a man who had accomplished his life's mission. But before the year had reached its end, thoughts about a new activity entered his mind. As he looked back during those calm moments on the events that had gone by since he conceived the idea of founding the Anath Balikashram forty years ago, he was amused to find that in his life there had been cycles of ten years and at the end of each, a new idea, a new outlook and a new and powerful urge to take up a new activity took possession of his mind. As he observes in his *"Looking Back"*,

"When I was eighteen, I began to learn the English alphabet and a new vista of life was opened before my eyes. At twenty-eight, I took up the Murud Fund which became a very important side-activity of mine for several years. The Golden Jubilee of that Fund will be celebrated in October 1936. Ten years later, the Hindu Widows' Home Association was established and I am happy to see that it has been rendering very useful service to the Society. When I was forty-eight, the ideas of the Mahila Vidyalaya and the Nishkam Karma Matha took possession of me and I enthusiastically took up corresponding activities. These institutions after several years' successful work were merged into the Hindu Widows' Home Association. It was at the age of fifty-eight that I took a leap in the dark to found the Women's University."

Fortunately, as he goes on to say, no new idea emerged at the age of sixty-eight, and his undivided attention was given to the University for ten more years. At seventy-eight, however, he began to think of a new activity and for the first time it was a scheme for the spread of education among villagers. Probably, in 1935, he was able to see that the cause

of women's education was making rapid strides on the path of progress. It was enthusiastically taken up by private bodies as well as by Government. School for girls were founded in every district and in all big towns and even in many of the smaller ones. Many boys' Schools began to admit girls. Mr. Karve now began to feel that he should take up the cause of the removal of illiteracy and the spread of elementary education among the villagers. District Local Boards and a few private bodies were conducting primary schools in many villages, but there were still many more in which there were no schools and the benefits of education were unknown.

The idea possessed him completely. He wrote an article in the Kesari in which he gave an outline of the scheme. Soon afterwards, the Maharashtra Village Primary Education Society was established. The object of the Society was to start schools of the old indigenous type to teach the three R's in villages in which there were no schools run by the District Local Boards. In these schools it was proposed to make a special effort to keep up the reading habits of adults who knew how to read and write. For this purpose, every school was to have a small library attached to it. Mr. Karve set the ball rolling by placing himself in charge of a school and by paying fifteen rupees from his monthly pension of seventy rupees for the expenses of the school.

Mr. Karve took up the work with religious devotion. He was not in the habit of writing a diary, but began writing it on the New Year's Day in 1936. On the first day he wrote:

"I have never written a diary before. While I was abroad visiting foreign countries, I had made an attempt to keep a daily journal, but could not do it satisfactorily. From to-day, however, I propose to write a diary regularly. My only purpose in writing it will be to keep a record of the new venture I have undertaken. It is an humble effort to start schools in those villages in Maharashtra in which no schools exist. I propose to devote at least ten minutes every day to this work. If I do not, I should deem it disgraceful of me to have neglected the work. It is for this reason that I have decided to write a diary from to-day."

Whether it was because his confidence in his physical

strength was growing weaker or because it was his usual habit to judge himself and his efforts with severity and relentlessly, Mr. Karve kept the diary regularly for some time. It was, however, hardly necessary for him to maintain it as a corrective or as a reminder for himself. Throughout the crowded years of his life, he had loved and cared for nothing as he had loved and cared for work. It was a hard life that he had chosen, and he had lived it well. He could not have looked back without satisfaction upon the years that had rolled by since he took up the work of the Murud Fund. When he wrote the first page of his diary, he had stray scruples in him, and he sometimes judged himself unjustly. The only person in the world to whom he could be unkind was himself.

It is true, however, that for a man of his age, it was a stupendous task. He was aware that private efforts to spread literacy in the villages were insignificant, even like a single drop of water in an ocean. Still, he took up the work for he believed that his humble efforts and those of his colleagues would be an indication of the awakening among the people in the matter of the spread of education. In less than a year, he was able to collect Rs. 2,700 for the work, and two schools had been started. In these efforts, he had the valued and able co-operation of Mr. R. S. Bapat, a retired Engineer, who had been doing useful work in the Khed and Shiwapur Talukas for the uplift of the villagers.

The work steadily grew in his hands. Mr. R. B. Bhagwat who had spent many years as a teacher and was Head Master of the Nasik High School when he retired joined Mr. Karve. In ten years the number of schools conducted by the Maharashtra Village Primary Education Society was forty. The work of the Society went on till 1950. When Government formulated a scheme for giving grant-in-aid to voluntary schools in villages, it became unnecessary for the Society to continue its activities.

The workers and students of the Ashram at Hingne, with the help of the old students, planned to celebrate the 81st birthday of Mr. Karve, which was to fall on April 18, 1938, as an occasion for thanksgiving. Early in 1937, they pre-

pared a plan and worked out the details. The life-workers started the 'Karve Felicitation Fund' and everyone came forward with a contribution of his or her half-month's salary to the Fund. A representative committee with Mr. Grieve, Director of Public Instruction then, as Chairman, was formed to organise a joint display of sports and other physical activities of all Girls' High Schools in Poona. Mrs. Saralabai Khot, an old student of the Ashram, and her husband Dr. G. K. Khot, gave a donation for commemorating the occasion by constructing a swimming pool at Hingne.

Celebrations were held all over the country on April 18, 1938. For Mr. Karve himself the day was not different from any other; it was only another day on which he felt contented and thankful that he had been able to do something useful. However, even when he had become eighty years old, he had not ceased to have a yearning to do something more. It always seemed to him that he had not done enough. For every day that dawned, on every eighteenth of April, he felt thankful that he had a new day for doing some more good.

Mr. Karve had spent some years of his youth in Bombay as a teacher. He taught in schools and gave private tuitions to students. For more than twenty years, he had served in the Fergusson College as a Professor and had taught Mathematics to hundreds of students. However, the real and more abiding teaching he has done was at Hingne where he never did any systematic teaching in any of the institutions founded by him. But all the inmates and workers of the Ashram, the Vidyalaya, the Pathshala and the Adhyapika Shala had the incomparable advantge of learning from one who lived near them. Every word he uttered, every little action of his, was an education for them. When they gathered together to offer their homage on his eighty-first birthday, the idea uppermost in their minds was that they were in the presence of a teacher who was exceptional not only in the qualities of a teacher but in his capacity to do good to everybody and at all times.

21

At Ninety—Still Young

IN 1942 the Banaras Hindu University conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters on Dhondo Keshav Karve. By having his name enshrined in its records, the Banaras Hindu University honoured itself.

The world now admired the man who had accomplished in his life all that a single man was capable of accomplishing—more than most can. But in his own eyes, what he had been able to do was negligible, only a small portion of what he thought he should have done.

Forty years ago, he had started the Balikashram. It was only a home for the widows. The Mahila Vidyalaya was an institution meant only for women—and mostly for those who belonged to Maharashtra. By founding the Women's University and particularly after he had received the donation from Sir Vithaldas Thackersey, his activities and aspirations had gone far beyond provincial boundaries. The University was an institution for the whole of India. Yes, it was, but it was meant only for those who wished to have higher education. The percentage of those who were able to complete their education in schools and go to the University was very small. The vast majority of India's population did not even know how to read and write. Would he be content with doing something, whatever its worth and the success he had attained in it, only for those who belonged to the so-called middle classes? Were the illiterate farmers and labourers also not his brethren? He heard their mute call. Unless

he did something for them, he felt, his mission in life would remain unfulfilled. Out of these restless thoughts, was born the Maharashtra Village Primary Education Society. For more than twelve years, he worked for the Society. In January 1948, he wrote:

"The Society offered financial help to any person who came forward to conduct a school in a place where there was no school. Today, there are forty such schools and their work is supervised by the Society. I have been going round every morning for two hours to collect funds for the Society. Generally I take one volunteer with me when I go round. I accept any donation, however small, even an anna or two pice. When the Congress accepted office, all these schools began to get grant-in-aid from Government. The Society today has a balance of sixteen or seventeen thousand rupees."

It was almost entirely due to Dr. Karve's efforts that the Maharashtra Village Primary Education Society was able to expand its activities so rapidly and even after giving financial help to all the forty schools, it had a balance of more than sixteen thousand rupees.

The world is wider than Maharashtra or even India, and it was not enough to strive to give equality of status and opportunity to women who form only one half of the whole human race. Dr. Karve had always been conscious of the inequalities which existed also among men and communities. It was inhuman, he felt, to allow these inequalities to exist. He was aware of the work that was undertaken and was being carried on for the removal of the curse of untouchability from the Hindu society. This work could be extended to wider spheres. Particularly during the war, Dr. Karve felt the need of making an organised effort to restore among the people confidence, which had been shaken almost to its root by the war, in a life of peace and of co-operative effort. As he heard about the horrors of the war and pondered over them, the urge to do something became irresistible.

He had heard a good deal of the 'World Fellowship' which was started in 1918 by Mr. Charles Frederick Weller in the United States. The object of this organisation was to establish a World Government for the common welfare of all the

people of the world. The idea of a World Government had a great appeal for him. He wrote to the founder of the World Fellowship and had a reply. He continued to write to him to obtain reports of the Fellowship's work from time to time.

In 1934 the Society to Promote Human Equality was founded in London. One of the promoters of this organization was Frederick J. Gould whom Dr. Karve had met during his visit to India in 1913. Mr. Gould had come to India at the invitation of the Education Department of Bombay to give demonstrations in moral training to school children. Dr. Karve met Mr. Gould again in Geneva at the World Education Conference. From Mr. Gould he obtained the literature of the Society of which he was one of the founders. He joined the Society as a member by paying a membership fee of five shillings. The Society brought out a magazine. Dr. Karve read very carefully the writings which appeared in the magazine. They revealed to him for the first time the idea that human equality was not only an ideal to be preached from the platform or the pulpit, but one which could be made practicable in social and political life.

As he earnestly pondered over the objects of the Society to Promote Human Equality, it became manifest to him that in India where political emancipation had almost completely occupied the minds and energies of the people, very little was being done to spread the ideas of equality among the different communities of the Hindus, and also between the Hindus and the Muslims and the followers of the other religions. The political leaders were doing all that was needed to give India back her political freedom. Political freedom by itself was not enough to build up the Indian nation. It was necessary for the people to be more conscious of their social and spiritual obligations to one another. It was necessary to have a change of heart which could be brought about only by accepting the ideal of human equality and practising it. All these thoughts crossed Mr. Karve's mind frequently, and as he thought he felt that there should be in India an organization of the type of the Society founded by Mr. Gould and his friends in London. He decided to found it himself. In an article which he contributed to the Indian Review of

Madras in 1942, he gave an outline of his scheme. He concluded the article with the following words:

"If my physical and mental strength continues to remain as it is today, I propose to make a humble beginning for Maharashtra after the war is over."

He stated that he would start the society for Maharashtra only because he felt that it was beyond him to make an effort on an all-India level.

A year passed by and still the war went on. He was eighty-five now. He grew impatient on account of his growing age. If he waited for the war to come to an end, his health might begin to fail and it would no longer be possible for him to take up the activity. He, therefore, decided to make a beginning immediately. Mrs. Varubai Shevade, a life-worker of the Ashram, had just retired and was free to undertake some new activity. She was glad to be able to give her assistance to Anna in his new venture. On January 1, 1944, Mr. Karve and Mrs. Shevade issued a statement in which they gave an outline of the Samata Sangh (Society for the Promotion of Equality) which it was proposed to start They invited people to join the Sangh by paying a membership fee of a rupee per year. They went from door to door collecting signatures of those who sympathised with the object of the new organization. A hundred signatures were collected in about three months. The Samata Sangh was then formally inaugurated on April 21, 1944, at a meeting held at the Gaikwad Wada under the chairmanship of Mr. N. C. Kelkar. Among those who joined the Sangh there were persons who belonged to different shades of opinion. They joined it because they knew that the objects of the Sangh were above party considrations, and also because its promoter was too great to belong to any party and commanded universal respect. By his outlook, work and achievements, the founder of the Samata Sangh was most worthy of starting an activity which aimed at removing all differences and distinctions and promoting the common welfare of all men and women.

During the next two years the number of members of the Sangh reached six hundred. Dr. Karve carried on cor-

respondence with people in different parts of India to give publicity to the aims and objects of the Sangh. In November 1945, he found a valuable colleague in Rao Bahadur Sapre of Bombay who founded a branch of the Sangh for Bombay and the suburbs. Mrs. Durbagai Joshi, the well-known political worker of Mahavidarbha, soon followed by starting a branch there.

With an enthusiasm which put to shame many a younger worker, Dr. Karve went from place to place to preach the gospel of equality. In January 1947, he went to Sangli where he was invited to participate in the *'Suvarna-tula'*[1] celebrations of Mr. Vishnu Ramchandra Velankar, a prominent industrialist of the place. After the celebrations were over, Mr. Karve stayed in Sangli a day longer and addressed the professors and students of the Willingdon College on the aims and objects of the Samata Sangh. From Sangli he went to Miraj where a public meeting was held in his honour. Later he visited Budhgaon, Kirloskarwadi, and Oglewadi. In March he visited Kolhapur where he was invited to lay the foundation stone of the Mahila Seva Mandal building. He took advantage of the function to tell the members of the Mandal about the Samata Sangh and its aims. The residents of Kolhapur organised a special function in his honour on the last day and collected a sum of two hundred rupees for his new activity.

Speaking as the President of the ninety-ninth anniversary celebrations of the Nagar Vachan Mandir of Poona, on May 4, 1947, Dr. Karve said,

"If we are really anxious to avoid calamities like the last World War, the most effective thing to do is to establish a common central government for the whole world."

Among those institutions which were making efforts to make the ideal of a World Government possible, Dr. Karve told the audience, was the Samata Sangh which he had started.

In order to carry on the work of making known the objects of the Sangh more speedily and effectively, he started

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1. *Weighing against gold.*

in July 1947 a monthly bulletin with the name 'Manavi Samata'.

Murud, his home town, invited him to participate in the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of the Murud Fund. This Fund was founded by a band of young workers sixty years ago with Dhondo Keshav Karve as their leader. The Bhagini Samaj of Murud held a meeting in the Durgadevi temple with which the name of the Karves of Murud has been intimately associated. Before he returned to Poona, the grand old man of Murud went to Murdi, the home town of Dr. Paranjpye, to preside over the Prize Giving of the local School. He did not forget to visit the Taluka town of Dapoli where he addressed a well-attended meeting in the Tilak Smarak Mandir.

In a moving appeal which he issued in 1948, Dr. Karve said,

"I do not ask for much. The annual subscription of the Samata Sangh is Rupee one and eight annas only. This small amount includes the subscription of the monthly bulletin 'Manavi Samata'. The demands on a member of the Sangh are by no means excessive. They are very modest. We do not lay down a time limit for the total acceptance and practice of the teachings of *samata*. Those who adopt it as an ideal and try to practise it as far as they can are accepted as members of the Sangh."

On April 18, 1948, Dr. Karve completed ninety years of his age. The ninety-first birthday was celebrated all over India by his countrymen and countrywomen who felt thankful that he was still with them and was actively working for the cause he had undertaken. Dr. Rajendra Prasad presided over the function which was held in Bombay to celebrate his birthday. A purse of over a lakh of rupees was presented to him on the occasion. Two years before this, he was able to participate in the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Anath Balikashram. Looking back on the fifty crowded years of that favourite child of his, Dr. Karve felt thankful that his efforts had not been in vain. He felt at the same time that the work he had done was very little in comparison with the work that still lay ahead.

The Society for the Removal of Caste Distinctions (Jati-

nirmulan Sanstha) was inaugurated in Poona in October 1948. At the preliminary meeting which was held on October 10, Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, the Chairman of the meeting said:

"Mr. Godbole, at whose invitation we have met here, has derived his inspiration from Shri Annasaheb Karve from whom I also have learnt the first lessons of public service."

The Society founded by Mr. Godbole was one of the many instances of what Dr. Karve was accomplishing by preaching the gospel of equality under the auspices of the Samata Sangh and through the pages of the 'Manavi Samata'. During the months and years which followed, the work of the Samata Sangh found wider scope in the activities of institutions like the Jati-Nirmulan Sanstha.

As Dr. Karve was working for the Samata Sangh with youthful vigour, his wife was withdrawing herself from the entanglements of life. She lived alone at Yerandavane in a small cottage in the compound of the College. Her sons and daughters-in-law used to say to her,

"Baya, why don't you come and stay with us? You are too old now to live alone."

She could stay with Dinkar at Yerandavane or with Bhaskar at Hingne. Baya resolutely declined their invitations.

"In my own house, I ruled like a queen. Your homes are your kingdoms. You say you'll do anything to make me happy. I know you will, but can't you see that there's a difference between your kingdom and mine? How can I reign in a realm which is yours by right? So long as there is strength in my limbs, I shall not be dependent on any one. If and when I lose my strength, I shall have to come to either of you for shelter and support."

Anna visited Baya every day. Irawati and Kaveri went to her as frequently as they could and made enquiries about her needs. But her needs were few and they were easily met. Her husband gave her fifteen rupees every month. She preferred to spend from the interest on the amount she had saved and invested. Dr. Karve would not accept back what he had given her. So she added the amount accumulated from those monthly allowances to the Chiplunkar Bhaubeej

Fund of the Ashram.

Some years ago Baya was staying for some time at Hingne where a separate room was given to her. She used that room for conducting a school for the children of the villagers. This school was later merged into the primary school conducted by the Hingne Stree Shikshan Sanstha. The school was named Anandibai Karve Prathamik Shala. Baya bestowed on the school children the same affection as on her own. She left all that she had for the school—a sum of more than twelve thousand rupees.

Baya began to feel that her end was drawing near. She prepared herself for it. She had given out of her own belongings enough to her sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren and she felt that she did not owe anything to anyone. With a mind calm and free from attachment, she looked back on her past life. "I have had good days as well as bad", she said, "but, on the whole, I have had happiness and joy". There was only one desire left in her mind now. Like a Hindu wife that she was, she wished that she should die before her husband.

"I would like to have the same death which my mother had." she would say, "On the last day of her life, she got up as usual, and prepared the bread and gave it to my brother for breakfast. She looked tired. 'Would you like me to stay at home to-day? Aren't you feeling well?' my brother asked her. 'No,' she replied, 'I am quite well.' In the afternoon she lay down for her nap and she never rose."

Baya felt satisfied that throughout her long life she and her family had never been dependent on any one for anything.

In 1947, she went to Hingne a little before Diwali. Then she stayed on and never returned to her own independent house at Yerandavane. No one knew what made her change her mind. She lived there for three years till the last day of her life. She died at Hingne on November 29, 1950. At ninety-two, Dr. Karve became a widower for the second time.

During her last days, her constant companion was Kaveri, her youngest daughter-in-law. About ten years before, Baya had written her reminiscences which were published in 1944. Baya's method of writing was unconventional. She wrote

down things as they occurred to her without sequence. She was anxious that some one should edit her writings. No one agreed except Kaveri. She collected the odd bits of paper on which the reminiscences were written and arranged them. It was a long and tedious process, but to Kaveri it was a revelation.

"As I struggled through the rough writings," Kaveri wrote in the introduction to Baya's *'Maze Puran'*, "I could not help feeling that if Baya had been born in the West, she would have founded happy homes like the Boys' Town, and hundreds of her grateful children would have erected statues of 'Our Mother'."

Not even her husband seemed to know adequately Baya's greatness of mind and sincerity. Long before Dr. Karve thought of taking up the cause of Human Equality, his wife had already dedicated herself to the service of suffering and forsaken humanity. She was one of the very few persons who had the eye to see the wealth of the land in the poor, uncared-for, dirty, starved, wandering children. She became a mother to them. For forty years she toiled and suffered for them. With the tears of her eyes she washed the dirt from their bodies; with the blood of her heart she nursed their wounds. Wherever she went her first thought was about these children. If she was invited for lunch or dinner, she would first ask, "Will you give some food for my children?" She was furious at the enormous waste of foodstuffs which she invariably found on occasions like weddings. In fact there was nothing she hated so much as waste of anything. If there was a wedding or an *upanayan* ceremony, she used to go and say, "Will you give for my children a small portion of the food grains you are going to waste?" No one liked a question so bluntly put, and sometimes Baya had to hear harsh words in reply. She did not mind them.

Baya did not found any institution like any of those founded by her great husband, but she was herself a great and noble institution.

Baya came to stay at Hingne but not to stay with Bhaskar. 'I have come to stay in the Ashram,' she told Bhaskar and Kaveri. For three years, she lived in the first hut which

was built for the Ashram. It was there that she laid down her weary body and fell asleep for the last time. Kaveri offered to send her food cooked in her house. She would not accept it. "I'll have my food from the common kitchen". she said, "I have not given any good things to you when you were young. What right have I, then, to accept good things to eat from your house? The food from the Ashram kitchen is good enough for me." Her son and daughter-in-law felt a little hurt at such rejoinders, but they knew Baya too well to think that she was unkind.

For two years she continued to take her food from the common kitchen. As she grew weaker every day, Kaveri quietly took charge of her meals. Baya protested a little, but yielded. 'I know you are obstinate,' she said to Kaveri but there was no anger in her voice.

Day by day, the woman of strong will became weaker in body and resigned herself into the hands of her daughter-in-law who did everything for her and nursed her with tender care.

Diwali came with her lights but there was no joy or enthusiasm in the Ashram. Life was fading from Baya's body. Anna came every morning and sat by her bedside. Neither spoke but there was silent communion between the two hearts that had been bound together for fifty-seven years. On the night of Tuesday, November 29, began the last race between life and death. For some time, the body refused to yield. Towards evening it gave up. Anna had come from Yerandavane and had stayed on. He watched the face of his dying wife as life was slowly passing out. When someone suggested that he should go to bed, he rose and after a last, lingering look, quietly left the room.

The silent hours of the night were not disturbed by any sound. The silence with which the woman of eighty-six was preparing to leave revealed the strength of her spirit and even of her frail body which, as it lay huddled there, looked no bigger than that of a child.

Baya's last desire was fulfilled. She died with the red mark still adorning her forehead.

Anna stood motionless as the earthly remains were being

consumed by fire. In the evening he returned to the place to have one last glimpse of the place where the last parting had taken place.

A *tulsi vrindavan*[1] now stands on the spot where Baya was cremated. It is now a place of pilgrimage to all. Anna visits it whenever he comes to Hingne. There he remembers the companionship of fifty-seven years, but there is no sorrow on his face or in his heart. There cannot be any for his heart is filled with countless, happy memories. Three years later, Dr. Karve received with the same calmness the news which came from Bombay of the death of his eldest son. Professor R. D. Karve died after a short illness, on October 14, 1953. He was seventy-two years old at the time. As he lay on his deathbed in a hospital, his brothers were cautiously preparing their father's mind for what was coming on. A little before dawn on the 14th, news came by a long distance call from Bombay. The message was sent by Dinkar who was at the bedside of his brother when the end came. Bhaskar broke the news to his father. Dr. Karve received it without a sigh. There was silence for a few seconds. It was broken by Dr. Karve himself.

"Here I am, an old man of ninety-five!" he said, "It was my time to quit. Instead, the call came for my son! It is a queer world!"

Thirty-eight years after he was elected to preside over the annual session of the Indian National Social Conference in Bombay, Dr. Karve was requested to inaugurate the Maharashtra Social Conference in Poona. The Conference was convened by a number of Social Reform Organisations including the Jati-Nirmulana Samstha of Poona and the Bombay Presidency Social Reform Association of Bombay. The inauguration took place on April 18, 1953, the ninety-sixth birthday of Dr. Karve. His inaugural address was a brief one. He spoke for about ten minutes in a clear voice which reached the remotest corner of the spacious amphitheatre of the Fergusson College.

He exhorted the Conference to give an effective and bold

1. A decorative earthen vessel with the plant of holv Basil.

lead not only to Maharashtra but also to the whole country in removing social distinctions and in the establishment of social equality.

There was a touch of poignancy in the sentence with which he concluded the address. "I am an old man now, and I cannot say how many more sessions of this Conference I shall live to see."

Nine years after distant Banaras honoured the grand old man of Poona with the honorary degree of D. Litt., Poona thought of conferring the honorary degree of D. Litt. on him. A third Doctorate (in Literature) came to him in 1955 from the S. N. D. T. Women's University. Then followed in quick succession other honours. The Government of India decorated him with a Padma Vibhushan in 1955. In 1957, which was the hundredth year of his life, the University of Bombay entered the name of Dhondo Keshav Karve in its pages for the second time. In 1884, he had taken the degree of Bachelor of Arts from this University, and he had regarded the acquisition of that degree as something to be proud of. In 1957, the Syndicate and the Senate of the University of Bombay regarded it as a matter of the deepest satisfaction and pride that they were conferring another degree—the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws on him. At the special Convocation which was held on November 23, the Chancellor, Shri Sri Prakasa, said,

"We have reason to be grateful to Maharshi Karve for accepting the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from us. In attempting to honour him, we are truly honouring ourselves. In him we have a most distinguished alumnus of our own University, a most devoted public worker, a self-sacrificing patriot, a courageous champion of the humble and the distressed, an ideal person who has practised all that he has preached, and one who has, by the simplicity and purity of his own personal life, shown to us what a true representative of our ancient life and thought is and can be."

Dr. Karve was present at the Convocation to receive the degree in person. There was a departure from the usual practice when he, as the recipient of the degree, made a brief speech to give expression of the particular sense of pride he

felt in receiving the honour from his old University. He said:

"When I took my degree in 1884, I never dreamt that I would ever be classed with men like the late Dadabhai Navrojee or Sir C. V. Raman and receive a Doctorate of this University. Providence has been kind enough to give me a long life and a rich reward for the humble work I have done for the women of India. Today's honour is one more proof of the love and indulgence with which Society has always treated me. During the remaining span of my restful life I will always remain grateful to my Alma Mater for the honour she has done me today. It is my sincere wish that this century-old University will rise to greater glory in producing sons of India worthy to shoulder the great tasks that lie ahead for us after independence."

The three educational institutions of Bombay where Dr. Karve was educated held a joint function to pay their homage to him and offer him their felicitations during his hundredth year. They were the Robert Money School, the Wilson College and the Elphinstone College. The meeting was held in the Elphinstone College Hall on November 24, a day after the Special Convocation of the University of Bombay. One of the most interesting items of the programme was the speech made by a boy from the Robert Money School, Prahlad Dabholkar, who said that he was proud to belong to a school of which a great man like Maharshi Karve is an old pupil. Dabholkar said:

"May I tell you why I have been asked to offer the felicitations of my school and these beautiful flowers on behalf of my school to Maharshi Karve? In him we are honouring a man who is completing a hundred years of his life, and I have just completed a hundred months of mine."

Maharshi Karve was presented with a beautiful silver plate and an address on behalf of the three institutions. He made a brief reply in which he recalled the happy days of his school and college life.

"I am deeply grateful to you" Maharshi Karve said, "for having organised this function and for having invited me to be present. The three institutions to which I belonged more

than seven decades ago, the Robert Money School, the Wilson College and the Elphinstone College, have each left their imprint on my mind. I owe a debt of gratitude to them which it is difficult for me to express in words. Bombay in those days was so different from the modern crowded city of today that one is staggered by the comparison. As a young man from the very backward areas of Konkan, my mind and intellect were shaped by these three institutions where I was educated. Today, all those teachers who influenced and shaped me are long dead and gone, but they all come to my mind on this occasion. To you, their successors, and to the students of today, who like me then, are standing at the threshold of life, I give my best wishes.

"It is not given to everybody to enjoy such a long life as me, and that also as a comparatively healthy person. I am further fortunate that the institutions with which I was connected as a pupil including the University of Bombay have honoured me within the last few days. I can only say that I am thankful for their best wishes and felicitations and wish great prosperity and fruitful activity to all of them. The future of our country, whose history from the first unsuccessful attempt to drive out the intruder to the celebration of the first decade of independence I have been privileged to see, is in the hands of the persons we turn out from our schools and colleges and Universities and I hope that the educational traditions of the city of Bombay will take their proper share in the onward march of our country. Once again 'Thank you'."

On the last Republic Day (1958), the list of public servants and officers selected for recognition by the award of honours by the President of India, was headed by the name of Dhondo Keshav Karve on whom the President conferred the Bharat Ratna, the highest honour the country can offer. By official recognition, Maharshi Karve now belongs to the highest rank of the distinguished sons and servants of India.

PART IV

22

The Greatest Gift

"Even if I get a pice each from the thirty three crores of my countrymen, I shall be able to run my institutions without difficulty." Said Anna to a girl of about sixteen who had just returned from her campaign to make collections for the Bhaubeej Fund of the Ashram. The girl was boastfully telling her friends that she had refused to accept a donation of four annas which someone had offered her. When Anna heard of this, he sent for the girl and told her that she was wrong. He tried to impress upon her mind the fact that it was not the amount that mattered but the thought and the attitude which accompanies it.

Maharshi Karve would have liked to be called and treated as a *bhatji*—a priest who lives on charity. His life's mission had made him a beggar in the cause of his institutions. For over sixty years he did the work of collecting funds for the Ashram, for the Vidyalaya, for the University, for the Village Education Scheme and for the Samata Sangh. In 1886, long before he thought of founding any institution, even before his second marriage, he had taken the lead in founding the Murud Fund. While he was working in the New English School he had started the Students' Fund. His fund of energy for collecting funds was inexhaustible. In the worst of times his enthusiasm reached the greatest heights. For donations and contributions he did not depend on persons who had wealth. On one occasion when he had an unpleasant experiece at the door of a wealthy gentleman, he asked Pro-

fessor Mydeo who had gone with him, "Why did you bring me here? Have I not told you that I don't wish to go to the door of a rich man?" He has acknowledged with pride in the reports of his institutions that they have been thriving mainly on the help he had received from those belonging to the middle classes.

When one of his institutions was suddenly deprived of a large sum which used to come annually, the Maharshi set out again with the alms-bowl in hand. He visited cities, towns and villages, but he met and appealed mainly to the common people and gratefully accepted whatever they gave out of the little they had. One of the places he visited was Vita in the South Satara District. The place is now known as Tilakpur. A meeting was held in the Nagar-Vachanalaya, the local Library and Reading Room. He did not make a long speech. After telling the audience about his institution and its difficulties, Maharshi Karve made an appeal for help. The audience was moved. No sooner he sat down than those present came forward to offer donations. Some gave fifty rupees each, others gave twenty or ten each and there were many who could not give more than a rupee. As the list of donors was steadily swelling, one man rose from his seat and loudly announced his own donation of a pice. He then went up to the table at which the Chairman and the distinguished guest were sitting. He placed the pice on the table and then returned to his seat. There was deep resentment at his action but Dr. Karve himself had gratitude in his eyes as he looked at the man. No one, therefore, said anything. After the list was complete, Dr. Karve rose once again to thank those who had responded to his appeal. As he spoke, he took the pice in his hand and once again looked at the donor gratefully. He had a special word of acknowledgement for his pice. He said:

"I do not estimate the worth of this help from its currency value. It has come from a sympathiser. Undoubtedly he has been inspired by a desire to help what he thinks is a worthy cause. In such generous and kind acts, I find the acknowledgment of my friends and well-wishers of my humble work and from them I derive strength and courage for my future efforts."

During the summer of 1921, Mr. Karve went to places in the southern part of the Bombay Presidency and in Mysore State. Mr. Shankarrao Sirur, a prominent businessman of Davangeri, received a letter from Mr. Karve saying that he was visiting the place for a day. Mr. Sirur invited him to stay in his house. On the day he was to arrive, there was eager expectation and excitement in the house, particularly among the children. They all expected to see a man looking as big as he was known to be great. At about ten in the morning a small man wearing a simple dress and carrying his bedding under his arm arrived at the door. When the children learnt that that was Mr. Karve, they could hardly believe their eyes or what they were told. Mr. Karve addressed a meeting in the evening and had a small collection. At night he was offered a separate room but declining it, he preferred to sleep in the common hall where about ten or twelve others slept. Before half-past nine, he went to bed. He was not disturbed by those who slept in the hall but chatted and laughed and played with cards till about midnight. At six the next morning, he was ready to depart for the next place in his programme.

During the Diwali of 1947, Anna had gone on one of his tours. He was expected to return to Poona any day. At about ten-thirty at night, a tonga stopped at the gate of Dr. D. D. Karve's house at Yerandvane. All came down from the terrace hurriedly. Through the door opened by Bhaguji, the servant, Anna was entering. Irawati felt a little ashamed of herself. She felt guilty for not keeping a few things from those which were cooked for dinner.

"Anna, may I give you some bread and an omelette? I'm so sorry, there isn't any rice—"

Anna did not allow her to complete her sentence. "Don't worry. I can easily do without rice one day".

He ate the things placed before him—some bread, an omelette and a banana, and heartily enjoyed the simple meal. He did not seem to miss the rice mixed with curds without which his usual dinner remained incomplete.

This is one of the unforgettable memories which Anna's youngest daughter-in-law, Kaveri, narrated in one of her

writings. Kaveri wrote further:

"Many eminent persons who appear very reasonable and polite in the society behave like tyrants in their own homes. Our Anna is an exception. Even after a whole day's fatigue of travelling, he did not have a word of annoyance at the scanty meal he was served with on his return home."

Even Baya has gratefully acknowledged that her husband did not cause her the least worry on account of any fad. "He ate anything I cooked and never complained". She said. "He is a vegetarian and does not like fish, eggs or meat. But if a friend told him, 'Anna, just taste this, it hasn't a bad smell', and offers him some fish, he would eat it just to avoid displeasing that friend. He would never keep anyone waiting for him for lunch or for dinner. If the party was getting late, he would join them even without having his daily bath which he would postpone till after the meal was over."

Mr. M. D. Sathe of Poona was Dr. Karve's pupil in the Matriculation class at the New English School in 1908. Forty-three years later, he retired from service and came to stay in Poona. Some of his old class-mates of the New English School also were staying in Poona. They met together one day and formed a group of those who belonged to the Matriculation batch of 1908 of the New English School. They had a social gathering and invited their old teachers among whom Dr. Karve was the oldest. Those old pupils of the New English School, most of whom had reached the age of sixty, were filled with joy and felt proud when they received blessings from their old teachers. A photograph of all those present was taken to commemorate the occasion. After two or three days, when copies of the photograph were ready, Mr. Sathe wrote to Dr. Karve offering a copy to him. In the reply he received, his teacher told him that he would himself collect the copy of the photograph from his house. Mr. Sathe and his family could not contain their joy when Dr. Karve came walking to their house. He enjoyed the tea and other refreshments which were offered to him. He would not use the tonga which was kept ready for him, but insisted on walking back. Before he left, he paid the price of the photograph which he received from Mr. Sathe.

Many persons who have known Maharashi Karve intimately have said that the most prominent trait of his nature is his regular habits. It is true that he is regular and frugal in his habits, but more prominent than this trait is the fact that he has never made any fetish of his habits, his likes or his dislikes. If any one offers him tea at any time of the day, he says "Yes, I'll have just a little." In December 1955, he was in Bombay to participate in the Birth Centenary Celebrations of Sir Narayan Chandavarkar. One of the functions arranged on the occasion was a dinner. He readily accepted the invitation to the dinner which was extended to him by the organisers who had not expected that he would accept it.

Shortly before he celebrated his ninety-first birthday, he had gone to Malvan. At six in the evening after a day's trip to Chendvan, he addressed a public meeting. Next morning the party was to take the steamer for their return journey to Bombay. Someone asked him if he would like to see a play at night. "Oh yes, let's go." he replied. Kaveri who had gone with him tried to dissuade him, but he told her, "Do you think I'll miss my sleep? Well, tomorrow we have the whole day on the steamer where I'll have nothing better to do. But we shouldn't disappoint these friends who have taken the trouble to come to invite us." Commenting on Anna's acceptance of the invitation, Kaveri wrote,

"Many great men are known for their disciplined habits. There is discipline in Anna's life but it is altogether different from the discipline which other great men are known for. Most of them have rigid rules about rising and going to bed at particular hours, restrictions about eating, and so on. But with Anna, there is reasonableness about everything. His habits do not cause the least annoyance to anyone. They are not hard and fast, but there is a flexibility in them. Many people who visit him, press-representatives among them, come with the expectation of finding the secret of his long life in what they call "his regular habits," but they go away disappointed."

When he went to Murud in 1947, those who were with him could not fail to mark the great change. Fifty-three years

ago, Anna was treated like an outcaste by the people of Murud on account of his second marriage. Now, it became almost impossible for him to go to all the places where he was invited. The shastris and pandits of the town held a reception in his honour. The meeting held at the Durgadevi temple was memorable for the enthusiasm displayed by the women who had organised it to show their gratitude for one who had become the emancipator of women. At seven in the morning, he went to a friend for tea, to another at nine and to a third one for lunch at twelve. Three more invitations were already accepted for the rest of the day. Still, when someone came with a fresh invitation, Anna promised to go to his house also. When Kaveri protested, Anna said to her, "No Kaveri, we can't decline an invitation so full of affection like this one. Come, let's go."

Great as have been Maharashi Karve's life and his work, greater still is himself. And that greatness may be summed up in one word and one concept—simplicity. His friends, colleagues and admirers have found different rare qualities in the life that he has lived and the work he has accomplished. One of them has found the secret of his successful life in "the Arjuna gleam in his Brahman eyes, the gleam that tells —not of dreaminess which only dreams, but of the dream-genius that frames a noble conception and proceeds to plan, with concentration and business capacity, schemes for the service of humanity. . . ." According to Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, Anna's life has been a great lesson of idealism, endless activity, and high sense of morality. Those who have watched and studied the different stages of his life of public service have proclaimed that in him there is a mind which has never ceased to grow and extend the scope of its usefulness to ever widening spheres. It is also true that even the most devoted of his disciples and colleagues sometimes fail to understand or appreciate his ways of thinking and acting. One of them was filled with jealousy when he saw Anna showing greater confidence in a few workers like Parvatibai, on Nana Athavale, or Seetabai Annigeri or Gangubai Tambole, and secretly accused him of being partial. Gradually, however, his jealous thoughts vanished as he realised that what Anna valued in

those workers was their unquestioned and selfless devotion to the cause of the Ashram. How was Parvatibai able to make the work of the Ashram her life's mission? What was the driving force behind Nana Athavale's action in giving all that he had saved, a lakh of rupees, to the Ashram? Did not Gangubai leave everything she had to the Ashram? And is there anything Seetabai will not do for the Ashram which gave her a new birth? As Professor Mydeo pondered over these things that had come to pass or were happening, he felt ashamed of the petty jealousies he had allowed his mind to entertain for some time. As those petty thoughts vanished, he saw that Anna knew how to value the zeal and devotion of his lieutenants. Anna knew more than this. To none of the workers he gave a word of advice or of admonition. He intervened only when he knew they needed guidance, and such occasions were rare. Thus he gave full scope to independent and individual effort. He could do this because it has been his faith that great things are accomplished even by men and women of limited capacities if they have confidence in themselves. In this way, devoted workers like Professor Mydeo were trained. Thus did they learn to know the real greatness which Anna possessed. It was the greatness of his humility. The compassion of his heart, refused to look upon nayone as too low to be his brother or fellow worker.

Even at the meetings of the Committee of Management of the Ashram or of the Senate or the Syndicate of the S.N.D.T. University, Maharshi Karve spoke very little. It was difficult for most people to understand why he would not utter a single word even on occasions when it would have altered the course of the decisions. His silence annoyed the workers. On a certain occasion, a serious charge was levelled against two most trusted workers of the Ashram whose services were lent to one of the other institutions. Those who knew them knew that nothing could be more remote from truth and nothing more akin to it than their innocence. They also knew that if Anna testified to their integrity of character, the charge would melt and vanish like mist in the rays of the sun. Anna kept his lips sealed. Why he would not say anything no

one knew. Baya who knew him better perhaps could have found out the secret for them.

"Mr. Karve never took my side." She wrote in the story of her life, "There were several occasions on which he would have done well to say a word or two in my favour but he did not. The memories of those occasions often come back to me with pain.

"Many a life-worker has come to Hingne, served the Ashram for a time and has gone. Some of them left it with offended pride, others carried sweet memories with them. For Mr. Karve, however, everyone had warm affection and regard. None bore him any ill will. Even though some of them may have had a grudge against the institution or its management, their affection for Mr. Karve himself did not diminish; if at all, it grew. There is no wonder Mr. Karve has never taken sides and has never quarrelled with any one even for persons close to him even though he knew they were in the right."

If anyone asks Maharshi Karve to tell him something about his contacts with leaders like Bhandarkar, Ranade, Vishnu Shastri Pandit, or Agarkar, he is sure to have this answer:

"They were giants. I was only a camp-follower." This answer would remind one of what John Morley said of John Stuart Mill at whose feet he sat and learnt. "There he was, a great and benignant lamp of wisdom and humanity, and I and others kindled our modest rush-lights at that lamp." Like Morley, Karve would claim only to have kindled a modest rush-light at the great and benignant lamps lit by earlier reformers like Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Ranade and Vishnu Shastri Pandit. But that modest rush-light, in due course, became a very bright lamp and has continued to throw its light far and wide. Yet, the man who kindled it and has held it across the wide span of almost a century would only look upon it as no more than a modest rush-light.

Why did this man always sympathise with those neglected and looked down upon by society? Why did his heart bleed for those whose wounds lay for years and for centuries untended? What made him regard all problems of social reform

and social justice as problems to be tackled and solved with compassion? What furnished the urge for his efforts for the establishment of equality among men? Why has he always been reluctant to accept a position of honour even in the institutions founded by him?

To all these questions the answer is the same. It is to be found in his estimate of himself. Having been trained to it from his boyhood, he has learnt to regard himself as a humble worker. Often he has condemned his shyness as a shortcoming and has sometimes even cursed himself for it, but it is also true that in condemning this he was doing injustice to himself. Throughout his long life he has been a stranger to himself, and has not known to what lofty heights his humility raised him. It enabled him to face misfortunes without complaining and to meet successes honours and distinctions with a balanced and unruffled mind.

23

Things That Endure

DHONDO Keshav Karve is now known to the whole of India and even beyond her shores as Maharshi Karve. In the evening of his life, he lives in the midst of the admiration and gratitude of his countrymen who respect him as a Maharshi. The epithet of Maharshi is handed down from ancient times. Even today the Hindu life has retained in its philosophy and ideal way of living the teachings and practices of the Rishis of the Vedas and the Upanishads. They are summed up in a verse from the Bhagavadgeeta which has been one of the beacon-lights of the life of Maharshi Karve.

> "He who regards everybody as his own self,
> Who makes his own the bliss and sorrow of everybody,
> Is the greatest Yogi." (VI, 32).

Every Hindu accepts this teaching as an ideal. There are many who try to practise it. It is a difficult ideal and only those succeed who seek its realisation not through passive renunciation but through service and through hard and incessant labour. One of those few who have had success in full measure is Maharshi Karve.

If he is asked, "If you had a second life to live, how would you reshape it? What would you avoid or add?"

He answers, "I would live it all over again in the same way without any addition or alteration."

With this satisfaction, he regards his life and work today. There is no regret, no yearning for 'might-have-beens' in his looking back.

Maharshi Karve is not a *sanyasin*. He has lived life with full faith in it and enthusiasm for it, and has used it for the betterment of all. He has always given and has not received anything for himself. His life has been a continuous endeavour to efface all littleness. Neither failure nor success, neither adversity nor fame, has altered its course.

Religion has had a supreme place in all his aspirations and efforts. He has been conscious of the fact that "individual efforts on the part of man are so feeble that he cannot achieve anything simply by his own exertions." He has acknowledged his gratitude to the unseen as well as the seen forces which have helped him and given him success. In his 'Looking Back' he refers to several turning points in his life which, he thinks, were out of the ordinary. The opportunity he had to learn English when he was eighteen; the death of his first wife which led to his second marriage with a widow; the new fields of activity which were opened up as a result of his second marriage; the invitation from the Fergusson College which made it necessary for him to leave the Maratha High School, the schoolmaster's profession and Bombay and to make Poona his home; the arrival of the pamphlet giving information about the Women's University in Japan; the donation from Sir Vithaldas Thackersey; these and several other events have sustained in him the faith that some hidden power has been guiding his steps and the course of his life.

On religion, morality and philosophy, his views have been progressive and they are the outcome of incessant mental effort. His long and intimate friendship with Narharpant Joshi helped him in the early years of his life in finding the proper channel for these views. As he says in his autobiography: "Free and independent thinking came to me as a result of Narharpant's friendship and the discussions we used to have on such subjects. As a consequence, those beliefs about God, and about sin and virtue which had taken possession of my mind earlier began to recede and gradually vanished."

Narharpant was an admirer of the writings of Herbert Spencer and from him his friend, Mr. Karve also learnt to understand Herbert Spencer's views and gradually adopted them. Never to look upon any book as inspired by God or

upon any person, however great, as God's incarnation—this attitude of mind was the starting point of Maharshi Karve's changing views on religion. To regard a good man or a great man as a human being striving to reach the highest pinnacle of righteousness is, according to Maharshi Karve, a far greater tribute to his worth than to worship him as a divine incarnation.

Does Maharshi Karve believe in God? No, and yes. Throughout his life, he has endeavoured to find out if there is a personal God. He has not been able to find spiritual solace in the belief that there is a God who dwells apart from the universe, who presides over and controls the destinies of human beings, and who can be propitiated by prayers or offerings. He has, however, fixed his faith in a Supreme Being which pervades the universe. The individual should and can strive and be one with that Supreme Being. The ideal a man should fix his eyes on should be so lofty as to make him feel step by step that he is and becoming one with the Supreme Being. He has many a time acknowledged his dependence on a Higher Power for the good things that have come to him. In his inaugural address to the Maharashtra Social Conference in 1953, he referred to his long life as a gift from God. However, he has never depended on what men of religious faith would call divine help. Maharshi Karve's life and faith are a notable illustration of a daring truth which a great prelate, Dr. William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, once uttered: "It is a great mistake" he said, "to suppose that God is only, or even chiefly, concerned with religion". Maharshi Karve may not have a religion but he has a religious spirit. Before the religions of the world came into being, the religious spirit was in men. It enabled them to purify themselves, to lift themselves and to strive to reach the ideal of perfection. This yearning to purify oneself, to lift oneself and to be perfect has been the driving force of Maharashi Karve's life. Had it not been for his inveterate aversion for a life of renunciation and mere preaching, he would have adorned the *gadi* of the most venerable of Shankaracharyas. He has the composed, detached mental and moral vision and attitude of a *sanyasin* combined with a

desire for restless and endless activity which seeks liberation here and now. Men with definite conceptions of religion would prefer to call him a high priest pursuing a secular goal. It is not of much importance to Maharshi Karve whether a man is in the right or is in the wrong. He has sympathy and even admiration for those who choose a line of action after careful and independent thinking although he does not approve of that particular line of action or way of thinking. He did not at first approve of all that his eldest son, Professor R. D. Karve, was doing to propagate ideas of birth-control, but he admired the fearlessness with which he propagated them and the devotion with which he stuck to them. What Professor R. D. Karve admired in his father most was his gift of understanding by which he was able to adjust the ever-changing currents of thought of the outer world to his own way of thinking.

In spite of his stern detachment and his crowded hours Maharshi Karve loves the little, fleeting things of life. His grandchildren have in their grey-haired Anna a playmate who heartily joins them in the joys and thrills of the Diwali crackers or of the baloons at the fair. He has been happy with the young as he has been serious with the old. He has friends among the young as well as the old, but his best friend is his own self. He has never been tired or afraid of being alone. Today in the midst of thousands of admirers he is alone. All his contemporaries have disappeared behind the curtain. But he finds solace and even delight in his loneliness.

Nothing in him has changed. Inside the hundred-year old man there is still the exuberent energy of the mind of a student and a worker. Today, he spends a good deal of his waking hours in reading, and when he is tired of reading, he listens to the radio. The old habit of concentration on a single thing survives the battles he fought. There are no more battles to fight or victories to win, but the mind which has been trained by himself to concentrate on great and serious things of life can create interest for itself in ordinary things now. He enjoys reading his grand-daughter's text-books or listening to the programme of light music on the radio. Un-

like other great men and wokrers who know well how to concentrate only on great things, Maharshi Karve has been able to escape the tyranny of being only great.

Many people come to see him. He talks to them about many things. He still remembers many things and can correct the statements made by younger men about the things of the past—of those early days of Vishnu Shastri Pandit and Ranade. Those memories fill him with delight. People talk to him of those times to tell him that he is one of those giants who gave India her social emancipation. It is difficult for him to understand why they should be so lavish in paying him their tribute. Shaking his head he says,

"I know my worth better than you do. I belong to a much *lower rank than those early giants. I know there is hardly* anything outstanding in what I have done. My achievements, such as they are, are the outcome of the circumstances in which I worked and of the opportunities I had. They are within the reach of any young man or woman who possesses average intelligence and ability."

The Maharashi was born and grew in a world far different from that in which he will be shortly celebrating the centenary of his birth. But he does not find himself in a strange world. There are those who are close to him who say that now he mostly lives in the past, but that is not the whole truth. His enthusiasm for the education of women today may be the same as it was when he founded the Women's University forty-three years ago. But it hardly comes in his way of admiring the great strides women have taken in public life, and he is not surprised. Many of the things he sees around him are new and unfamiliar but no one has heard him exclaim with a sigh, 'It was not so in our time!'

Unlike most old people, he is not weary of life or of living. To younger men who talk of retiring from active life, he says,

"I have lived for a hundred years and still I have never thought of retiring."

Maharshi Karve will never think of retiring, because at heart he is still young and will ever remain young.

24

The Flame Burns On

THE life-story of Dhondo Keshav Karve is incomplete still, but the story of this book, which is intended to commemorate the completion of a century of his life, must end here. The Centenary Celebrations to be held in April will have a three-fold significance in India's modern history. They will be unique because the hero is the first among India's great sons to complete a hundred years of his life most of which have been spent in the service of the neglected and the poor; they recall the various landmarks in the history of the progress of Indian women with which Maharshi Karve's life has been identified for more than half a century; and they commemorate the life and character of a man who has kept alive in them the best in the ancient traditions of the land.

How many more years will be added to the Maharashi's life or how many more chapters can be written for a book like this one cannot say. The best part of the story, however, is told. It is the story of a frail man who took from the hands of his elders the torch of reform and held it in his hand ever since. He has already expressed his desire to hand it on to others. He wants it to burn on. The flame will burn on, but it is to be seen whether its light will remain cloistered in the fond memories of a glorious life which has reached its zenith, or will cast its light on new and unknown paths to inspire and guide younger workers dedicated to new endeavours for the betterment of mankind.

It is the Maharashi's hope that the torch may be taken

up by hands which will not let it fall on the ground. With this hope he went to the amphitheatre of the Fergusson College on April 18, 1953, his ninety-sixth birthday, to inaugurate the Maharashtra Social Conference. He was happy to be able to have the opportunity of meeting the leaders and workers of a younger generation. His heart was full of grateful memories as he spoke.

"This is a great day for Maharashtra", he began. "The Social Conference which was founded by Justice Ranade had not met for twenty years. We have met here to hold its session for the first time after twenty years. It was my privilege to have seen all those departed leaders whose names have been mentioned in the appeal which was issued in connection with the holding of this Conference. It was my greater privilege still to have seen the work done by most of them. I could even claim some of them as my contemporaries."

His voice became soft as he spoke of those early giants.

"Those who fought the battles of those early days are all dead. I am the only one left behind—the only surviving representative of a past generation. I have held in my solitary hand the torch of social reform which was lit by them. I am now too old to hold it any longer. I have, therefore, come here to hand it over to you."

He handed over the torch to Justice Gajendragadkar, the President and the delegates of the Conference with a message. He spoke like the prophets of old but the words which his lips uttered contained a message as new and as fresh as the age in which the Conference was meeting.

"I was born when the Struggle of Independence of 1857 was not over," he went on, "My eyes have seen the British power at its zenith and also its last receding steps from this land. Like you I also have been a witness to the glorious spectacle of India emerging out of her political slavery as a free nation. We are a free nation today, but there is still a gap in our glory of freedom. We have not yet found one thing without which we shall never be able to enjoy the sweetness of freedom. It is social equality."

The Maharshi said nothing about the problems and achievements of the earlier generation to which he belonged.

He only spoke of an ideal which appeared to him still far distant. Even the attainment of independence, he confessed, had not taken them nearer that ideal.

"On the contrary," he declared with remorse in his voice, "certain shortcomings which kept us divided even during the British regime but had not got beyond control then have now become more prominent and more dangerously active."

The audience held their breath as they heard the moving, fierce words.

"Independence was brought to our door by world conditions and by the leader we had in a man of the stature of Mahatma Gandhi, but I would be so daring as to say that it came to us before we earned and deserved it by our own efforts."

He was one of those who did not know how to be jubilant over political emancipation.

"We have political freedom in its fulness and yet we are weak and poor and devoid of moral force. Why are we so? The only answer I find is: because we have totally ruled out social equality, unity and fraternity from our thoughts, aspirations and efforts."

To the Maharashtra Social Conference which he was inaugurating, to Maharashtra and to India, he made an appeal which was backed by his own work of the last decade.

"Strive to remove all caste distinctions. Let a term like "Harijan" be a thing of the past. Let there be no inequality between men and women. And let there be a united Maharashtra and a united India. Let the ideal of welfare of all creatures (सर्वभूतहितवाद) preached by our ancient scriptures be our ideal and our call today."

The Maharashi gave this message to his countrymen five years ago. The words have not lost their poignancy or freshness. The echoes still resound. They are the echoes not only of his words but also of his acts, his endeavours—all that have made up his life story of a hundred years.

How would the reader like to leave the hero of this life-story when lays it down after reading it? Is he tempted to exclaim "One in an age!"? Let him hark before he utters, for the Maharshi, if he knew, would protest.

"No," he would say, "It's like *anyone in any age.*"

Let the reader accept the Maharshi's own verdict. It would make it easier for him to accept the Maharshi's life as a pattern for a purpose shaping itself towards the services of any worthy cause or endeavour. He will then be able to keep the flame he lit burning for ever.

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